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POLO IN INDIA

FIRST PART

CHAPTER I

HOW TO BEGIN POLO

THROUGHOUT the year young men are landing in India for the first time, to be distributed among the various stations, who are anxious to associate themselves with the Indian Sports of which they have read and heard so much. Many of these keen young sportsmen, for want of some one who can advise them, never succeed in making a good start and, being discouraged, give it up as hopeless. It is to these I would particularly address this chapter.

On board every boat there may be some one of experience to give sound advice ; there are certain to be several who, even unintentionally, give the wrong advice. When asked by the beginner how to get ponies, they reply, that the best way is to buy in the Bombay stables. Such advice is bound to produce only one result. The youngster spends all his capital on unsuitable ponies, and, after selling them at a considerable loss later on, finds he cannot afford polo.

My advice, therefore, and I emphasize it strongly, is never to buy untrained ponies in Bombay, or elsewhere, unless you have had the experience to purchase the raw article and also to make him into a polo pony.

Even then, there are many points to be considered. A pony's price may be Rs. 750 (£50), but there are many additions to be made before the pony can be ridden at an up-country station. The stable demands Rs. 17 from the purchaser, as well as from the dealer, as commission. The veterinary surgeon wants Rs. 15 for examining the pony for soundness, and remember this examination is a necessity, as all the stables contain a large proportion of unsound animals.

Horse clothing and stable gear for the train, feeding, the pay of the special man who brings the pony up-country, and the various other tips will mean Rs. 30 to Rs. 40 more. Add to this the railway fare Rs. 80 to Rs. 100, and the pony costing Rs. 750 in Bombay will have cost Rs. 900 (£60) by the time it reaches Meerut or Bangalore. Even if money is not the difficulty, there are other points to be thought of. New ponies cannot be galloped at once. Two or three months will be required to get them into condition, as many more to put on muscle, and only after six months will a pony be anything like fit for a good station game. The weaknesses new ponies are liable to will be discussed later, but taking the most favourable case, of good sound ponies, well selected, carefully broken,

and successfully entered to the game, ready to play after six months, each pony will have cost the owner from Rs. 1000 to Rs. 1100 before he can get any fun off him.

Later on, when vacancies have to be filled up, and after experience has been gained in all the many details connected with Indian Polo, buying from the stables can be made a most profitable investment ; but I most strongly recommend the new arrival to reach his destination unencumbered by any purchases of ponies in Bombay.

In every station, there will always be several ponies to be sold at a price varying from Rs. 500 to Rs. 900. These will probably be old ponies that have seen their best days, and which no veterinary surgeon could possibly pass as sound, but which are exactly what is wanted by a beginner on which to become initiated into the mysteries of polo. I will admit that it is just as difficult for a beginner to select the best value for his investment among old polo ponies as it would be in a Bombay Arab stable. In a station, however, he will have the assistance of some polo-playing friend who knows every animal, and will also have the advantage of being able to try the pony he proposes to buy in a game.

Before calling in the help of any one else, he should decide on the amount he is prepared to spend, and whether this sum is an absolute limit, or can be exceeded without fear of discomfort. In the former case, I strongly advise a portion

being kept back for unforeseen contingencies. For instance, if a beginner has only £100 to spend on polo ponies, he should buy two for Rs. 1200 (£80), and keep the balance in reserve. If he can afford £200, I would recommend him still to buy two cheap ponies as schoolmasters for about the same price, and a third, good, pony for Rs. 1000, keeping Rs. 800 in reserve.

My reason for making a point of this is that, after six months, the beginner will be fit to play in better games, and will probably want to improve his stable, passing on one of his original ponies, and buying one of a better class with the proceeds added to what remains of his reserve.

Having decided to spend from two-thirds to three-fourths of his available balance on two or three ponies, he should now consider how to get the best value for his outlay.

It may happen that there is no friend in his own regiment or service in the station to assist him, in which case, he must wait until he can make the acquaintance of a polo player who will be kind enough to assist him. In every case, I would advise the new-comer to exhaust the resources of his own regiment or branch of the service before looking elsewhere, and to buy from his own station before going outside.

In India, there are several ways of obtaining trained polo ponies.

- 1 Buying ponies, well known in a station, after trial, and playing them in a game.

2. Buying during a tournament after seeing them play.
3. Visiting another station, and selecting the best after riding them.
4. Getting a friend to buy.
5. Buying from among the many animals advertised daily in the *Pioneer* or other agencies.

Of these, the most common way and yet the most unsatisfactory, is to buy from those advertised for sale. To me, it has always appeared surprising how players can expect to get good value in this way. Not that owners, wanting to sell, intentionally describe their ponies wrongly ; but it is a fact that nine-tenths of us think our own ponies better than they really are, and are inclined to overlook their faults. Were it not so, we should not see such disappointment in the faces of the majority at local horse shows, when the judges award the prizes to animals owned by our friends and overlook our own favourites.

I must, therefore, recommend my readers to make it a rule never to buy a pony without seeing it, and rarely without trying it themselves, or by proxy.

At the present time, some of the best players in India own ponies which are marvellous when ridden by their owners, but which would be impossible for any one less firm in the saddle, or who does not possess an arm like a prize fighter. At the same time, there are ponies, and among them some of the very best, that do not play for strangers, but which are perfect under players they know. In

trying highly-bred ponies, therefore, and especially Walers, the new-comer should not lightly discard a pony with a high reputation if it has a good mouth off the polo ground, and provided it plays all right with an experienced player, even if the intended purchaser finds he cannot do much on it at first in the game.

Before finishing my advice on the selection of ponies, I must say something about height, class, and weight-carrying powers. In India, ponies obtain their polo certificates of height from the Committee of the Indian Polo Association if they can pass under the standard of 14-1. If six years or over, they then obtain certificates for life, and are described as I. P. A. C., or Indian Polo Association Certificate. At first, a novice, seeing a pony so described, may imagine such to be about 14-1, whereas the majority of polo ponies in India are between 13-3 and 14 hands.

Even those advertised as 14 hands are not always within an inch of that height. Between the height of a pony measured in shoes, without being allowed time to settle, and the same pony brought up for measurement to obtain the lowest possible certificate, there is always the difference of at least one inch, and sometimes even more.

In India, racing certificates of 14-1 and under are accepted for polo ; but it must be remembered that ponies holding racing certificates of over 14-1 can *never* be brought up for measurement as polo ponies.

With regard to the various classes of ponies met

with on Indian polo grounds, I must refer my readers to Chapter XXVIII, where I have dealt with them in detail. I must, however, mention, for the benefit of the novice, that Arabs and old Country Breds are the most suitable on which to learn the game. They are far easier to play, and will be found the most satisfactory.

Too much attention need not be paid to weight-carrying powers at first, because a novice will not go fast enough to do his pony any harm. At the same time, it is as well he should have some guide. This test is best found in the measurement of the foreleg. One leg should be held up by an assistant, and the purchaser should himself measure the other leg, about 2 inches below the knee, with a steel tape, if possible, but if not, with a sound tape. Measurements with the hand, string, or the edge of a handkerchief, are all unreliable. When we realize that a foreleg of 7 inches will carry 12 to 13 stone, but one of $7\frac{1}{4}$ inches may fairly be described as up to 15 stone, we see the importance of a quarter of an inch. As a guide, therefore, if our novice walks 11 stone or over, he should reject any pony not measuring $6\frac{3}{4}$ inches. A 13-stone man wants a 7 inches foreleg, and 14 stone or over should demand $7\frac{1}{4}$ inches. My last caution to the new-comer is that ponies must be paid for at once, unless bought from a dealer. To keep a gentleman waiting for his cheque, stamps the purchaser as the veriest novice, and is bad form.

CHAPTER II

HOW TO LEARN THE GAME

AS soon as a beginner has succeeded in obtaining a couple of ponies, he will be anxious to take his place in games; and though I would prefer to see him practising the use of the stick, quietly at a walk and trot, for a week or ten days, it is hardly to be expected that the ardour of youth will be restrained by the experience of age. At the same time, I must assure him that if he endeavours to learn polo only by playing in a game two or three times a week, it will take him more years than it would months, were he to be guided by the following systematic course of training.

A novice, watching a good game, cannot but think how easy it looks, and seldom realises that few men become good polo players under two years' constant practice. To obtain the best results, the beginner should learn the game step by step, and though there can be no objection to his joining in the game as soon as he can use his stick without damaging his own or other ponies, he must remember that just as cricket is learnt at the nets, and billiards by private practice, so polo

can only be learnt on off days, by becoming perfect with the stick, an art learnt by so few for want of patience. Later on, this constant practice will be drudgery, but to a novice keen on learning a new game, what can be more interesting?

Having provided himself with a few sticks copied from those of a good player, not too heavy nor too light, neither stiff nor too whippy, and of a fair length, 52 to 55 inches, the beginner should first learn the various strokes. This can best be learnt from a small platform of mud and bricks, which can be easily erected by the syces in a couple of hours. The height should be about $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet, but will require slight alteration according to the size of the player. A convenient size for the top is 2 feet by $2\frac{1}{2}$. At first the stick should be allowed to swing slowly when practising the various strokes, so as to acquire the correct knack. After two or three days, balls may be slowly bowled towards the striker, and by the end of a week the novice should be able to use his stick, provided he has been accustomed to other games and has devoted at least one hour daily to the first step to polo.

The six strokes he should practise are as follows :—

The first four are by far the most important, and fancy strokes should be left for a future time when the novice shall have become a first-class player.

1. *Off-side forward drive*.—The stick should be held with the handle leading similar to a

cricket bat when driving a straight ball back to the bowler's hands. The ball should be hit when it is opposite the pony's foreleg.

2. *Near-side forward drive*.—The thumb should lie along the back of the handle of the stick, which should be used like a racquet. When mounted the greatest care must be taken that the pony's mouth or forelegs do not suffer when practising these two strokes.
3. *Off-side back-hander*.—Holding the stick with the thumb flat on the back of the handle, the head above the right shoulder, elbow bent and the hand close in front of the shoulder, the arm is straightened and the hand allowed to fall forward and downward. If the arm is kept straight and the stick is the right length, the head will just graze the ground, and, meeting the ball, will drive it to the rear.
4. *Near-side back-hander*.—Bending over to the left from the hips upwards, hold the stick the full length of the arm, with the wrist at to the front. As the hand swings down and forward, gradually turn the wrist until, at the time of the head meeting the ball, it is leading to the rear.

These strokes are not easy to describe on paper, but can be shown practically in a few moments.

- 5 and 6. *Under-the-neck*.—This stroke can be practised from both sides, the ball being

sent at an angle of 45° to the direction in which the pony is moving.

If the novice has access to a wooden horse, he should practise from off that, rather than the platform, after the first three or four days. It will give him a better idea of the difficulty of using a stick mounted, and teach him how to avoid the pony's head and forelegs.

Recently, polo-pits have been introduced in India, but I consider them of little value compared to the wooden horse on an open space. In the pit, the balls come at a uniform pace, which is too slow, and the surface not being flat, practice induces a slovenly style of using the stick. The only advantage of the polo pit lies in it being an excellent way of exercising the arm, and it saves labour. In India the compound always contains a number of small boys, and the labour difficulty is here reduced to a negligible quantity.

As soon as the beginner has got some idea of using his stick with safety, he may be put up on a trained pony and practise at a walk, driving a ball along slowly with a slack rein, the left hand resting on the pommel of the saddle. It is more difficult to hit a ball well at a walk than at a faster pace, so a full week should be devoted to mastering this. At the end of the second week, the novice, if his practice has been carried on regularly, will be able to use his stick, to drive forward from both sides of his pony at a walk, and also to be able to hit mild back-handers.

The third week should be devoted to the same work at a trot, care being taken that the reins are kept perfectly slack, and that no assistance is derived from hanging on to the pony's mouth. Practice from the platform or wooden horse must not be relaxed, though the time given to this may be reduced to half an hour, or even less. It is only in this way that players can become stick-perfect in a few months, and remember that if polo players are good with the stick they are very good players, so few attaining this art.

During the fourth week, the novice may work at a slow canter, the same caution regarding the reins being observed. He will then be ready to take part in slow games. In every station he will not find slow games being played. It is a pity slow chukkas are not introduced at every station in India. It is the best way to teach young players, and the only way to break in young ponies with any certainty. The same rules are observed, except that no player is allowed to go faster than a canter, and continuous dribbling is to be discouraged.

I think that slow games, which are so popular at some stations, might be improved by playing on half the ground. A white chalk line drawn down the ground between the centre of each goal would enable two slow games to be played at the same time on one ground, and would teach players to avoid hitting round, instead of passing the ball. With ponies moving at a slow pace, the danger of collision between players from the other game would not be

worth considering. A small fine when the ball is sent out at the side line is a custom in one polo club in India, and might with advantage be introduced into slow games.

On off-days, practice should take the form of a few minutes on the wooden horse, and as much time on the polo ground, or other suitable place, as can be spared. I constantly hear players complain they are stale and want rest, but this is in my opinion a fallacy. I firmly believe that three or four hours a day is not too much to give to practice before and during a tournament. I have known several tournaments won by this, and this alone. The Inter-Regimental Polo Tournament of 1906 was a case in point. To onlookers, the most noticeable feature of the tournament was the extraordinary improvement shown by the 9th Lancer Team, between the first ties and the Finals, when they won the cup so easily. The reason for this is not far to seek. Every afternoon, this team turned out for two or more hours' practice when other teams were at the races. It is true that some players do not improve their ponies, and the more they ride them the worse the ponies play. It is on this account they imagine they are getting stale.

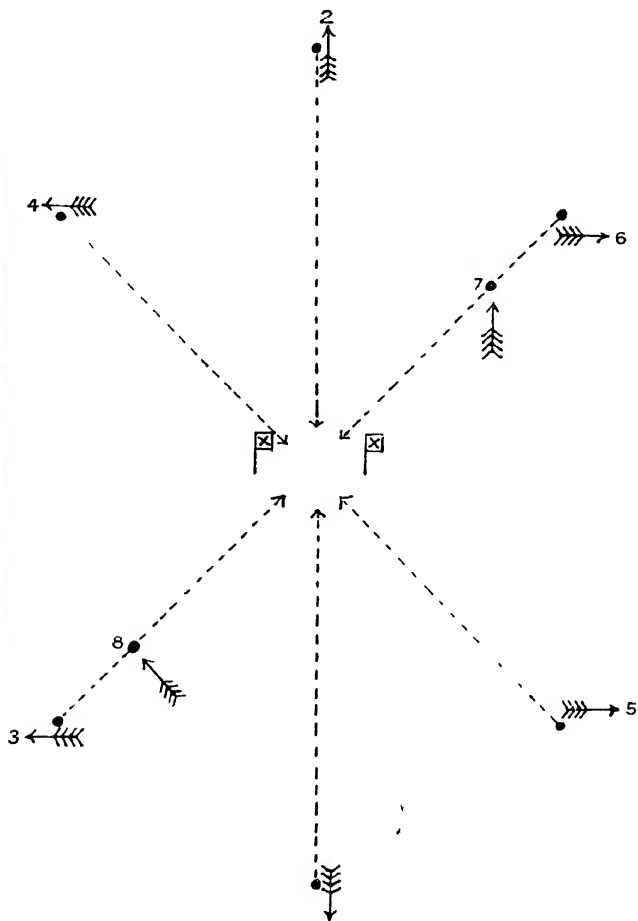
When practising alone, a beginner will soon find he can make certain of hitting a ball when at a slow canter, though he may not always send it where he wants to. The most common fault is to hit the ball too much to the left instead of straight forward, and the ball hits the pony's foreleg. The

cause of pulling the ball lies in the player hitting with the thumb to the front instead of the wrist leading. Unless this fault is corrected from the first, it will always interfere with straight hitting.

At first the ball can be dribbled slowly in front of the pony, when the striker is not likely to miss. Later on, when he learns to hit out boldly, it is a good plan to play with two balls, always driving one in the direction of and past the other. This will teach direction and length of stroke more than any other form of practice. At a walk, it is simple enough, but at a fast canter, it is by no means easy, and a man who can take two balls three times round a polo ground without missing, may consider himself first-class with a stick.

When practising back-handers, I recommend two players working together. If this is not possible, two small flags should be erected about the centre of the ground, and about a dozen balls taken into use. These may be placed all round the improvised goal, and back-handers to goal practised from all distances and from every sort of angle. In a few days it will be found that by looking back for the direction before reaching the ball, a player soon learns to hit back just as accurately as forward, and can place his back-handers in the best position for his own side. Plate II. gives eight back-handers of which only three can be looked upon as fancy strokes. The first of these fancy strokes, 4, can be executed in two ways. The first by a cut on the near side, turning the wrist during the stroke. This

Back hands and Fancy Stroke



*The Ball is shewn in the position
when hit.*

is most difficult, and I have seen only one man really master it. I refer to Thakur Dhokal Singh of Jodhpur. The same result, however, can be obtained by hitting under the pony's neck towards the left rear, the ball being kept just to the left of the pony's near fore (No. 7). Five and six require no explanation, but depend on the ball being allowed to pass the pony's heels before being struck, the rider leaning well back. Eight is in my opinion one of the most useful of fancy strokes by which I have seen many goals obtained. Bending forward, the rider drops his stick in front of his pony's nose, from left to right, and the inevitable result is the ball goes at a right angle to the direction of the pony.

If two players can practise together, the best exercise both for players and ponies is for one to drive forward to the other, who hits back to the first. Each player can take it in turn to lead, but it must not be thought that the driver gets less practice than the leader. He not only learns to make those long drives, so necessary for feeding his forwards, but also learns to meet the ball at all paces. I consider this practice so important that I give it in detail. The leader being given a start of 30 yards, the driver sends the ball past him as hard as possible, *and pulls up*. The leader looking back for the direction, sends a back-hander to the driver as hard as possible *and pulls up*. When the driver has become sufficiently good to meet the ball with certainty at a gallop, the leader, instead of hitting towards him, may look back and

hit away, the driver endeavouring to find out by the action of the stick where the ball is going, and moving off in that direction. None but thoroughly-trained ponies can carry out this practice well. At the same time no practice is so good for ponies. It teaches them to "lie" for the various strokes, shortening the stride for a back-hander and lengthening it for a drive. Moreover, the constant pulling up, being similar to a game, makes them extraordinarily handy.

Many other forms of practice may occur to players, but I know of none better than the above, for tournament polo as well as for beginners. It is not easy to take a ball three or four times round a ground, as the driver, as well as the leader, must both be hard hitters, certain strikers, and mounted on first-class ponies.

"Practice makes perfect" we read in copy-books, and there is no doubt that until a player is stick perfect, the more practice he puts in the better player he will become.

CHAPTER III

POLO STICKS

WHEN we consider the care and attention sportsmen devote to the selection of a gun, cricket bat, or racquet, it is astonishing to find some polo players contented with any kind of stick provided it is somewhere about the proper length. It is no unusual thing to find players paying large sums for their ponies and riding the best of cattle who use sticks which make it impossible for them to do justice either to themselves or their ponies. Even first-class players do not always insist on all sticks being made exactly according to sample, and when we realise that the slightest difference in the weight and shape of a stick may send the ball through the goal or just miss it, it is evident that all players should know something about this subject.

The length, weight and shape of a polo stick cannot be definitely laid down, for no two players work best with the same kind. I prefer, therefore, to advise the young player to begin with some old sticks belonging to a friend until he can make up his mind what kind suits him best as regards length, shape of head and pliability. After many months

and several changes, he will at last find exactly what he wants, and having found it, he should keep it as a sample, sending it to the best possible stick-maker, and insisting on every stick being made most carefully to sample.

I advise a beginner, when witnessing a tournament, to walk over to where the players have their sticks laid out, and take up one of each player. He will then find some that give him the correct feel, and can obtain some from the same maker by mentioning the sample of that particular player. No player could object to giving the name of the maker; but I admit it is sometimes annoying to be asked by strangers to give a stick as a sample!

Though I do not wish to maintain that any particular pattern of stick is better than any other, I would offer certain advice to those who have not already made their choice. In choosing a stick, the player should sit on a pony and swing the stick freely round from the shoulder with a straight arm. If the proper length, the head should just clear the ground. At first this will be found the best length with which to hit the ball. Later on a shorter stick may be preferred, but it should be remembered that a long stick gives a better reach, keeps the rider more upright and better balanced in the saddle, and also drives a ball further than a shorter one.

Heads can be made of all shapes, and of all kinds of wood or composition. A weak wrist requires a light cane and a light head, but if possible the male

bamboo head should certainly be used. It lasts much longer, and after being used once or twice can be depended on in a match. Moreover, the bamboo head being resilient, or springy, drives a ball quite 10 per cent. further than a wooden head. The shape I prefer is the curved head with an oval or elliptical section. The slight curve gives the player a longer reach than a cylindrical head. The rectangular ash head is the best all-round head for players who use the wrist stroke when hitting, but for those who, like myself, play with a straight arm and hit from the shoulder, no head but the male bamboo can be depended on to last any time. The stick near the head should be bound with thick string to keep the cane from splitting and to deaden the blow of the ball when it hits the cane instead of the head. It is a good plan to slip one or two rings, such as are used for umbrellas, over the handle of the stick and work them down to within an inch of the head. This protects the cane from blows better than anything. The principal cause of damage to polo sticks lies in the head breaking, or the cane above the head snapping or splitting. If heads break, the wood must be unsuitable, and if of constant occurrence, the player must adopt bamboo heads, which very seldom break, though sometimes they split from the wedge being too tight. Bamboo heads should either have a knot or joint at each end, or one knot in the middle, through which the stick is inserted. I prefer the latter, as the joint is the denser part, driving slightly

further, and the weight is correctly placed at the spot the ball strikes the stick.

When heads snap off, it denotes a bad cane. For this reason Assam and Burma canes should be rejected. The former are smooth, soft canes, and look as if they were varnished. The Burma canes are brown soft canes like Malacca canes. The only suitable canes for polo are the white Moonah or Singapore canes. They are very hard, and if cut with a fine saw, the cane feels like boxwood, the fibre being so dense. The best are those of a dull white with deep longitudinal lines down them like grooves. I have never seen these canes growing; but I believe they are ground canes, that is, they grow like vines running along the ground. A few years ago polo sticks in India were all made of Assam or Burma canes, being cheaper, and durable sticks could only be obtained from home, where nothing but Singapore canes are imported. Now I find the majority of players use Singapore canes, experience having taught them this economy.

It is still very difficult in India to obtain canes which do not split up after a few games, and whenever I order canes, I find it necessary to send details and illustrations to ensure that the heads are put on so as to reduce the risk of this to a minimum. For a hard-hitter, this point is so important that in former days I used to obtain the canes and heads separate, and put them on myself. At first this was a labour, but after some practice I could mount

eight canes in the hour, and then felt certain that the heads would not wobble in the middle of a match. The secret lies in sawing the top of the cane before inserting it in the head instead of splitting it with a chisel. If split, the crack opens upwards after a few blows, and the head, instead of remaining stiff, swings about, making straight shooting impossible. The glazed surface should also be roughed with a file to get the advantage of the glue. Having smeared the end of the stick, the hole in the head, and the fissure cut in the stick with glue, the cane is forced into the head by a few taps on the handle of the stick with a wooden mallet until secure. The wedge is then inserted and driven home without too much force. If force is used, the wedge will split up the head. I give this detail for the benefit of players as well as in the hope some of the polo-stick makers in India may see it and not be too proud to accept the hint. Heads should be rubbed over with linseed-oil before being used. It makes the ball travel further and preserves the head every bit as much as oil preserves a cricket bat. No oil should be allowed on the cane, however, as it is apt to rot it.

Handles are of all shapes, but the best and most universal kind are those made after the pattern of a racquet bat with a small rim at the top of the handle, being wrapped with soft leather over a foundation of thin cloth. Players whose hands get hot should try handles wrapped with nawar, a cotton tape used in all bazaars. It is rougher than

leather and the cotton dries up any moisture from the hands. Handles that chafe the hands are bad because before a tournament, when the work is increased, a blistered hand is fatal to success. For this reason I disapprove of string-wrapped handles and the red rubber used so much at home.

Polo sticks are best preserved by hanging them on the walls. Keeping them in bath rooms is no advantage, and if huddled away in a corner they get out of shape. If put on the walls, crossed in pairs, they keep their shape better, and act as a decoration. Three nails are all that is necessary for two sticks.

Although in India 14-1 is the height of polo ponies, it is not to be expected that all ponies are that height. On the contrary the majority of ponies are under 14 hands. Moreover, ponies standing the same height at the withers are not the same height over the back. It stands to reason that to use the same length of stick for a big pony and one standing two inches lower across the back is to ignore one of the many causes of inaccurate hitting. Even with a level lot of ponies there will be at least one inch difference between the correct length of stick required, and more usually three lengths in sticks will be wanted. It will be found an advantage to have these marked on the base of the handle L., M., S., to denote long, medium, and short sticks. Syces will soon recognize the difference, and when being taken from the syce, the player sees at a glance if the wrong size has

been handed to him instead of discovering it during the game by the inaccuracy of his hitting.

If players will insist on having only the best white Singapore canes, carefully fitted into bamboo heads, and take ordinary care about preserving them, they will find their sticks last for months until the heads actually crumble away. Certain favourite sticks can then be put aside for matches, and will be looked upon as intimate friends, just as a cricketer has his favourite bats.

CHAPTER IV

STABLE MANAGEMENT

IN India it is necessary for every horse-owner to be also a horse-master. Good syces are difficult to find, and even the best require constant supervision and guidance. On the other hand syces will quickly learn if treated with patience, and once taught are most reliable servants. To train syces it is essential to possess a good knowledge of sound stable management and to organise a good system from the first. This system must comprise feeding, watering, grooming and stabling, besides the suitable work in proportion to the quality of solid food consumed.

All these headings tend towards one object : to maintain horses in health and comfort, and to prepare them to carry out the work required of them without breaking down. This preparation or training must differ according to the purpose for which they are wanted, but certain general instructions are applicable to all. Horses in India are used for racing, polo and hunting, hacking, and for carriage work. Each class requires a different scale of feeding and work, and it is this which constitutes the problem which has to be solved by horse-owners in India. Moreover, every class of horse requires

different treatment. An Arab, a Country-bred and an Australian may be wanted for the same kind of work, but to treat them alike as regards exercise and feeding will usually result in disappointment. For example, to feed a lady's hack on the same scale as a race-horse would soon render it a positive danger to ride; and to hunt an animal accustomed only to the shafts would be certain to break it down.

Even a superficial knowledge of horse-mastership will enable owners to keep their animals healthy and fit for work, and beyond the obvious humanity in providing for the comfort of their animals, the economy effected will be considerable. I have no hesitation in stating that by far the larger proportion of polo ponies which become unfit for work from lameness or loss of condition is the result of ignorant treatment or improper feeding. Of the latter class starvation, chiefly due to dishonesty on the part of servants, is the main cause.

In India it is no unusual thing to find the bearer the man responsible for the stable. His duties are not only to engage the syces, but even to buy the forage, bedding, and stable necessities. I strongly disapprove of this custom, which is the result of ignorance on the part of the master about horses, combined with shrewdness on the part of the bearer, who by the judicious use of backsheesh among the syces is able to prove that he is capable of supervising the stable quite satisfactorily and to save master much worry and annoyance. In cases where the master is a hard-worked official with no

one to help him at home, the bearer appears to be the only solution. A new-comer to the country, with no knowledge of the language, finds that his only means of communicating with his syces is through his bearer, and this personal servant at once assumes charge. If any one suggests that his work is in the house and that the stable is in no way his department, he can prove with ease that it is the custom for the bearer to superintend the stable, and also explains that without his assistance there is certain to be trouble, a prophecy he manages to fulfil at the shortest possible notice. From the first moment that the bearer can be dispensed with in the stables, they should be placed in charge of a head syce, who, in addition to looking after one animal, makes all arrangements connected with the horses, receives his orders from the master direct, and furnishes his monthly account separate from the bearer's bill.

Under the dignified title of jemadar and the increased pay of one or two rupees a month, he exercises authority over the other syces, and can usually be trusted to do his best for the welfare of his horses. On the other hand, with the bearer in charge, unless an exceptional man, the stable never looks well. The bearer being absolutely ignorant about horses, and caring less, has but one object in view, that of making money. He buys the food and buys the worst and cheapest; he weighs the food, and cuts the amount on every occasion. Moreover, he is almost certain to be in league with

the bunia, from whom he receives a considerable "dasturi" * at the end of each month. I strongly recommend that bearers should have nothing to do with the stable. If the jemadar is not good, it is easy to replace him by a better, and a good jemadar should be entrusted, under personal supervision, with everything connected with the stable, including the engagement of syces.

I attach the utmost importance to this initial change, for until the jemadar has replaced the bearer, stable management is but eye-wash.

Having dethroned the bearer, and the butler of Southern India, the next point for consideration is the actual buildings, for bungalows more often than not are engaged without an inspection of the stables. Before a bungalow is engaged, the owner is bound to make it habitable, and this refers equally to the stables. The chief points which require attention are the roof, which should be tiled, not thatched, and the floor, which must be higher than the level of the ground, and macadamised. If the flooring is uneven and foul, or below the level of the ground outside, this must be rectified at once by the owner. A verandah is also an essential if ponies are to get the rest they require when in full work. In the plains, stables should face north or east on account of the sun.

Prior to the arrival of ponies, the stables should be cleaned and disinfected. Cobwebs having been removed, the walls may be washed with lime or other disinfectant, and the floors, unless new,

* Customary gratuity.

sprinkled with a strong solution, one to ten, of carbolic acid.* When dry, the stables should be bedded down, and poles procured in order to have everything ready for the ponies. Ponies after a train journey are always leg-weary, and to have to stand about half a day before the arrival of the bedding, etc., adds much to their fatigue.

[In India it has been the custom for many generations for ponies to feed out of buckets and to eat their grass off the floor. Both these customs are objectionable. Feeding out of a bucket is wasteful, for every time the pony raises his head, he drops a certain amount. Moreover, I have seen many ponies with the eyelid torn by the handle of the bucket, the end of which had become loose, and had caught in the eyelid as a pony was rubbing his head against it. Every pony, therefore, should be provided with a feeding box, wider at the top than at the bottom, or even an empty wooden wine case. The size of the feeding box should be sufficient to hold two buckets full. When empty of corn, the grass should be placed in the box and not left on the ground. In all troop stables horses are provided with an earthenware water-trough in which water is always kept before the horse. This is sound during the hot weather, and all private stables might with advantage follow the example.

It is important that horses should learn from the first that their food is to be found in the manger

* A wineglass of commercial sulphuric acid in a bucket of water, sprinkled on the floor from a watering-pot with the rose on, is equally effective and cheaper.

and not on the ground. Feeding from the ground teaches them to pick up bits of bedding, etc., and induces foul feeding, a cause of much indigestion tending to liver, skin disease and loss of condition.

When ponies are being groomed, syces usually tie them to the stable bars. This is objectionable, because the ponies usually seize the bar in the teeth and so learn to become crib-biters. When being groomed, they should be secured by two ropes from the roof to the rings of a snaffle or the Ds of the head collar.

Syces are very fond of the currycomb, and unless watched will use it to rub over their horses. This must be absolutely forbidden. The object of a currycomb is to clean the body-brush, *not* to clean the horse. Moreover, when grooming, the currycomb need not be in the hand, but put down on the window ledge until the brush is so fouled that it wants cleaning. If a pony has a long coat, a dandy brush is almost a necessity to get well to the roots of the hair. I can never understand the objection to the dandy brush unless it is that they are not used in racing stables. Thoroughbreds in racing condition will not tolerate the stiff bristles of this brush, but with animals less highly strung it not only saves labour but is a positive advantage.

The following articles of stable gear are required for each pony in India :—

Head collar, English make is an economy.

Head rope.

Horse rug with padded surcingle.

Horse blanket.

Two pairs bandages, flannel or Newmarket.

Bucket.

Feeding box.

Body brush.

Rubber.

Sponge.

Currycomb.

Dandy brush, one to three ponies.

Hoof pick.

Stable basket and brush to six ponies.

From the first, a time table should be arranged for the stable, and after very few days it will be found that the system introduced for stable duties will work without a hitch. In the cold weather, the hours observed must necessarily be different from those in the hot weather, the chief change being the hour for exercise and the hour for grooming. If the work takes place before the morning feed, horses must be given a small feed at daylight.

The following time table is given as a useful guide which can be altered to suit the various seasons and climates :—

Daylight.—Small feed (1 lb.). Clean out stables.

Sunrise.—Saddle up and turn out for two hours' exercise.

On return.—Water, dry back, brush feet and legs, and give morning feed. Bed down, put on bandages and close stables. This is the time horses like to lie down and rest.

taken that ponies are not left standing unclothed. When the legs are cleaned and bandaged, the rug can be removed and the back and body quickly brushed over and the rug replaced. Ponies should be watered on arrival, as the brushing over keeps the skin warm and reduces the danger of chill to a minimum. If legs are wet they must be carefully dried and brushed, but never washed.

When ponies are thoroughly dry and comfortable, they should be bedded down with the straw that is dry, adding a little top dressing if necessary. Wet bedding should be kept out to dry all day.

The feed should then be given, and consist of about 2 lbs.; grass being added as soon as the feeds are finished. The stables should be closed for at least three hours, and no one allowed to disturb the horses until midday stables. Some old ponies do not finish their feeds until they have rested. It will soon be found out which are dainty feeders, and such should not have a big feed given at this hour, but more at the night feed.

Syces must have two clear hours to prepare and eat their own food. If they prefer to clean the saddlery at once there can be no objection to them doing so, but they must be ready for midday stables at 12 o'clock.

With animals bred in a tropical climate, like the Arab and Country-bred, no difficulty will be found in maintaining them in health and condition. With English and Australians, more care will be required

during the hot weather, and especially during the rains in Northern India.

This is chiefly owing to loss of digestive powers, which produces slight fever or liver troubles. To guard against this, special precautions are necessary with regard to watering, grass and feeding.

Digestion depends partly on mastication of solid food, but even more on the strength of the gastric fluid in the stomach. A delicate feeder should always have his teeth examined, and if uneven and with sharp points, they should be filed.

The subject of watering is one which is much misunderstood, and which is responsible for more horse sickness than any other. Veterinary works usually dismiss this subject in a few words, recommending that horses be watered before feeding and never after. I do not for a moment question this statement, but every horse master requires more information on this important subject. It is no unusual thing to find owners holding the opinion that to water after feeding makes the grain in the stomach swell and produce colic. This is not the fact. A horse has a small stomach for his size, but drinks with great force. A volume of water passing through the stomach to the gut is liable to carry with it portions of undigested food which are apt to foment, producing gases which distend the bowels and may produce colic. For this reason horses should never be watered within an hour of feeding on solid food. I wish also to impress on my readers, and to emphasize it, that horses liable to liver,

fever, or indigestion, in short, delicate horses, should never be watered *within an hour before feeding*. A glass of brandy is a strong stimulant, but if diluted with half a pint of soda or water it has not more strength than beer. Similarly, the gastric juice is the natural and most powerful digestive, but if diluted with a bucket of water it loses its power and fails to do its duty. Fluid taken into the stomach is soon absorbed by the capillary vessels into the blood, but the gastric juice remains in the stomach. With human beings this also holds good, and we know that a long drink after exercise shows itself almost immediately on the surface by increased perspiration. Nowadays medical experts prescribe for weak digestion by forbidding any fluid at meals, but make no restrictions to the amount taken an hour before or an hour after. I am firmly convinced with many horses, and especially unacclimatized Australians, that injudicious watering is the chief cause of digestive troubles. It may be put forward as an argument against this theory that horses in India thrive better with water always in the stable. This fact, however, is for, not against this theory, for it is well known that with water in the stable horses drink less. In other words they do not fill the stomach with such a volume of water immediately before solid food.

I will now discuss clothing and clipping. Although horses in a state of nature do not require clothing, owing to the length of coat being dependent on the degree of cold, to work horses with long coats

would soon distress them. It is customary, therefore, to remove long coats by clipping, and to replace the natural protection against cold with warm clothing. To remove the coat without increasing the clothing is a form of cruelty which may result in the loss of the horse. At the same time troop horses doing fast work, for which the clothing is limited, can be maintained in a better state of health if clipped, even at the risk of lung troubles. Some well-bred ponies if warmly rugged and bandaged do not require clipping even in winter, but those which carry heavy coats should be clipped before being put into fast work. The question of clipping the legs or leaving the long hair below the line of the rug is one which depends on circumstances. Horses which are supplied with ample bedding and have all four legs bandaged at night are the better for being clipped all round. Those which are not so carefully provided against cold, should be clipped to the edge of the rug only. Cold is first felt in the extremities, the ears, feet, and legs, these being furthest from the heart, which is the centre of the blood supply, and though a well-rugged body will keep the legs warm, every assistance should be given by the application of bandages or by leaving the legs unclipped. To counteract cold, more nitrogenous food is required to maintain health. Warm clothing is, therefore, an economy and not an expense.

It is an undoubted fact that after the removal of the coat less corn is necessary. This has never

been scientifically explained to my own satisfaction, but I conclude that to supply the hair much nutriment is taken from the skin, which would otherwise go towards the forming of muscle and to supply wastage.

It is customary to delay the first clipping until the winter coat is fully developed, but I can see no object in this except to save stud grooms the labour of a second clipping. If horses are in fast work, such as hunters and polo ponies, they should be clipped as soon as the coats are long enough to cause discomfort by undue sweating. A month later they must be clipped again, and probably a third time in December or January. I have often heard it recommended that no horse should be clipped after December 15th, because the summer coat begins to show in January; but again I see no object in this idea. On the other hand, to work horses in January or February with long coats increases the waste of tissue owing to profuse sweating, which might have been avoided by an extra clipping. Polo ponies in England are clipped throughout the summer, it being found that they work better and require less corn without even their short summer coat, and I am certain many horses pig-sticking in India in April would be the better for having the clippers run over them.

The style of horse clothing required in India depends on the climate. North of Lahore, the Afghan wadded rugs are wanted, but elsewhere the most economical pattern is blanket backed with

canvas. After clipping, a second blanket beneath the rug is necessary. Hoods are not usually necessary except in racing stables, but it is well to have a couple of hoods at hand for use of ponies with colds or influenza. The cost of stable accessories may often seem ruinous, but we must realize that it is very false economy to risk even the temporary loss of a pony for want of a small outlay, which is not only necessary for comfort, but without which they cannot be kept fit for work. There is no old saw more true than: "For want of a nail a shoe was lost: for want of a shoe the horse was lame: for want of a horse the rider was shot, the message miscarried and the battle was lost. For want of a nail a kingdom was lost!"

CHAPTER V

FEEDING

THE subject of feeding ponies in India is one that cannot be learnt in a few days, because it is only by experience that the most suitable feeding with regard to the work can be estimated. At the same time, a novice will find he cannot obtain this experience in a reasonable time without a guide. In this chapter I propose to give certain scales of feeding as a guide, but these will have to be changed according to whether the pony is newly landed in India and requires fattening; or when fat has to be put into muscle, and so on. To summarize, this subject may be subdivided into the feeding required to get a pony into big condition, that for forming muscle and training. To make my meaning more clear, I would liken big condition to the state of a man landing in India after a long voyage; forming muscle to the process necessary before he could go through a 20-mile route march without being distressed; and training to the preparation he would require before he could play in a first-class football tournament, run a mile in five minutes, or fight a seven-round contest with the gloves on.

To get a horse into fat condition, soft food and abundant grass is required, with nothing but walking exercise. This should be combined with good grooming and stable management. If unhealthy, the advice of a veterinary surgeon should be called in, for it is evident that no good can be done until the internal organs are in a healthy state. Of course it may be argued that *loss of condition must be the result of loss of health*, but I refer here to liver and fever, with or without lung troubles, which so generally result from sea transport under unfavourable conditions. This is evident by the pale or yellow appearance of the gums on raising the upper lip. A healthy horse should be pink, like new skin, and any yellow tinge is a sign of liver or fever. If not pronounced, a few days' rest with soft food may bring improvement, especially if assisted by three or four ounces of Epsom salts for three days, followed by a daily dose of nitre, resin, and sulphur in equal parts, giving a tablespoonful in the night feed.

As a guide, therefore, I recommend the following scale for conditioning :—

Oats *	. . . . .	4 lbs.
Bran .	. . . . .	4 „
Boiled Barley .	. . . . .	2 „
Lucerne .	. . . . .	20 „
Dhub Grass .	. . . . .	40 „
Salt .	. . . . .	2 oz.

* The scales given are intended for 14-1 ponies. For 15-hand horses add 25 per cent., and for 13-2 ponies deduct 25 per cent.

Of course it may not be possible to feed on this liberal scale. Lucerne may be out of season, dhub grass may not be procurable, and oats, owing to the price, may be prohibitive. If gram and barley are available, but not oats, the following scale will answer the purpose :—

Parched Barley	1½ lbs.
Boiled Gram	1½ „
Bran	6 „
Boiled Bailey	2 „
Dry Hay	30 „
Carrots or Lucerne if available	5 „
Salt	2 oz.

To get animals into big condition, the following stages must be reached. First, the belly must swell out until it assumes the appearance of a mare in foal. Then the ribs must get covered with fat. This fat will first be noticeable at the lower portions of the ribs, and after a month rises as high as the short ribs of the loin. The hand placed flat on the ribs and moved laterally, moving the skin with it, gives the horse-master the correct appreciation of the amount of flesh on the ribs. Lastly, the fat shows itself on the back, loin, and quarters, which, when properly covered, have a round appearance.

As soon as the pony is in big condition, with pink gums, a bright eye, and healthy coat, it is time to put on muscle, increasing the work to long walking and trotting, gentle at first and increasing to three

or four miles. The feeding must also be gradually increased in proportion with the work until the following scale is reached :—

Oats	8 lbs.
Bran	2 „
Gram	2 „
Boiled Barley *	1 „
Dhub Grass	30 „
Lucerne or Carrots	5 „
Salt	2 oz.

or the alternative scale without oats :—

Parched Barley	3 lbs.
Gram	3 „
Bran	6 „
Boiled Barley *	1 „
Dry Hay	20 „
Lucerne or Carrots	5 „
Salt	2 oz.

It will be here noticed that even when muscle-forming work and feeding are given, the quantity of bran is equal to that of the aggregate of barley and gram. Barley is an excellent food boiled or parched, but should never be given raw.

As soon as the muscles stand out on the neck and shoulders, and the rib muscle can be seen as well as felt, the pony is fit for training, that is, the fast work necessary to get the heart and lungs strong

* Twice or three times a week.

enough to stand the strain of fast work. When training for racing, galloping on the course is no doubt the only way to produce the best results. With a good riding boy who does not spoil a pony's mouth, polo ponies and hunters may be trained in the same way. The result depends so much on the riding boy, who, if good enough for this work, would be a treasure, that I think it better to work ponies in a large school or track.

When getting galloping work, and when playing or in training for tournament polo, ponies should be fed on the following scale :—

Oats	10 to 12 lbs.
Gram	2 „
Dhub Grass	20 „
Lucerne or Carrots	5 „
Salt	2 oz.

Boiled barley 2 lbs. and bran 2 lbs., after polo.

No doubt ponies can be trained on parched barley and gram, but I must confess I have never succeeded in making them anything like fit on anything but oats. In former days, when oats were unknown in India, horses were trained for races all the same, but old writers allude frequently to the chemist's shop, and I am certain that if gram is increased to more than 6 lbs., Epsom salts and sal ammoniac must be used constantly to assist the digestion. If my readers want to play in first-class tournaments, they should feed their ponies on oats,

for it is an economy to do so. If quite impossible, the gram and barley must not be increased to more than 3 lbs. each, but the bran may be diminished :—

Gram	3 lbs.
Parched Barley	3 „
Bran	4 „
Hay	15 „
Lucerne or Carrots	5 „
Salt	2 oz.

Boiled barley 2 lbs. after polo.

Two pounds of boiled barley in the night feed mixed with bran and oats is an excellent restorative after polo, and should be the rule all the year round. In the same way, on Saturday nights a bran mash with linseed should always precede the day's rest on Sundays.

Horses not doing galloping work, such as harness horses, hunters not in training, and troop horses not during the drill season, should be treated as recommended for ponies during the muscle-forming process, or during the conditioning process, according to the work they are doing, but the quantity of grain must be increased according to the age of the horse.

Though the amount and quality of the corn feed will affect the horse's condition materially, too much attention cannot be given to the water and grass. In cantonments in India the water-supply is always good, and municipal water is preferable to well

water. I recommend the custom of having water in the stables provided the trough is cleaned daily before being filled. In addition to this, all horses must be watered three times a day, an hour before the feeds are given. Sometimes good grass is difficult to procure. In some parts of India stacked hay only is procurable, and unless ponies are in training for a first-class tournament, this dry hay answers the purpose well enough. To get the best value out of it, 30 lbs. a day is required. The ponies pick out the best of it, and the residue acts as bedding. Dhub grass, however, is necessary when fast work is being given. It is far more nutritious and a smaller quantity is sufficient. I have known horses liable to skin disease worked on nothing but dhub grass, and they have kept in excellent condition all the time. There is very little doubt that Sillidar Cavalry in India are able to keep their horses looking so well in spite of the small allowance of grain they consume owing to their system of enlisted grasscutters, who supply a very liberal allowance of excellent dhub grass. In some stations grasscutters are a necessity. My own experience of them has not been satisfactory. They want constant supervision, bring in very small allowances of grass, and what they bring is sodden with water to make it weigh double.

Contractors will, however, supply dhub grass at reasonable rates, from five to seven annas a maund, but cannot be depended on to deliver correct weight unless some one is there to weigh it daily.

Dhub grass should be long, for the **bamboo-like** stalks and roots are the best part of it. It should be dried for two days, and then well beaten out with a forked stick to remove all the soil and dust clinging to the roots. This is usually neglected unless insisted upon, and it is evident that clean coats cannot be expected to result from dirty food.

Too much attention cannot be paid to the cleanliness of food as well as the quality. For this reason all grain should be purchased uncrushed, and then cleaned and crushed at home.

Horse-owners would do well to learn something about Indian grain, as a little knowledge will enable them to obtain good value for their money, instead of the unsuitable sweepings sold by banias. The following hints may serve as a guide, but one practical lesson from one who understands this subject would be of more value than all the books ever written. The best oats obtainable in India are certainly Australian oats; but, except for training valuable race-horses, their price is prohibitive. Locally grown oats are smaller, but contain more substance than would at first appear, being very hard and concentrated. The best I have seen come from Hapur, near Meerut, and from Tirhoot. The price, if purchased from the grower, varies in a good year from Re. 1-12-0 to Rs. 2 per maund of 80 lbs., to which must be added the railway freight. It is an advantage to pay slightly more for machine-cleaned oats, as it saves the cost of cleaning, and sometimes a sack of oats contain over

boiling, it is an advantage to crush it, as it then requires only half the time to boil. Most syces understand how to parch it. The best way is in an iron dish, shaken up with red-hot sand. Gram requires more knowledge to select. Old gram has a black look and is usually weevil eaten. To test this throw a handful into a bucket of water. If weevil eaten, the injured grains will float, being hollow. Gram frequently contains a small seed, not unlike a bean but more round, which is injurious to the digestion. This seed can easily be detected when once pointed out. Good gram is of a light brown colour, firm and full, and pleasant to eat. Gram being a suitable food for syces, it is well to keep the forage store locked up.

Bran in India contains more flour than at home, and is not so valuable as a corrective. On the other hand it contains more nutriment: thus 8 lbs. of bran is as much as a horse requires when laid by and getting no exercise. The best bran is obtained

* Supplied by T. E. Thompson & Co., Calcutta.

from flour mills direct, but as it is not possible to use so large quantities, bunnias must be made to provide the best, which looks more like English bran, having large flakes, and not the dusty appearance of bazaar bran. To test bran or other grain it should be mixed in clear water when it will be seen by the colour of the water if earth has been added by the bunia to make weight. It is by paying attention to details of this kind that ponies can be made to look every bit as well as a public trainer could turn them out. Moreover, when the bunia and the jemadar realize that an owner knows about forage, and insists on getting nothing but the best, they find themselves obliged to give up those practices which is the custom all over India. In a stable of five ponies or more, it is certainly an economy to buy oats to last a year from a planter in Tirhoot, or elsewhere, during April or May, when oats are cheap. One hundred maunds will be found to be about the amount required, and any surplus can easily be disposed of at a profit after January 1st, when oats are scarce.

Though I do not recommend beginners to dabble in veterinary science, I must mention a simple alterative which I have found most effective, and should be kept in every saddle-room in India. A large jar containing equal parts of sulphur, resin and nitre, being obtained from the chemist, a table spoonful forms the dose for one horse or pony, and can be mixed in the night feed three days running. After leaving it off for three days, it can be repeated

again ; or it may be given every other night until the coat looks healthy. This alterative is quite harmless, unlike antimony, which should be avoided. It is especially valuable for ponies which have become run down or hide-bound, acting as a mild stimulant to the liver and kidneys. It must be remembered that more ponies in India are ruined by over-feeding than by under-feeding, and unless the digestive organs are in a healthy state it is as fatal to give full feeds of corn as it is to heap up a furnace with coal before the blast is in working order to consume it. In consequence, when an animal is thrown out of work, the corn must be reduced and the grass increased. If getting no walking exercise, 8 lbs. of damp bran is sufficient, and if led out for exercise twice a day 4 lbs. oats and 4 lbs. bran is quite as much as is required.

To conclude the subject of feeding, I want to impress on my readers that it is an economy to provide nothing but the best feeding for polo ponies, and any extra expense in the forage bill is saved by having no veterinary account. A healthy pony, apart from the internal troubles he is liable to from dirty forage, is far less likely to go wrong, as his tendons and joints are better able to stand the strain of fast work, and are impervious to the blows of stick or ball.

CHAPTER VI

GROOMING

THE state of a stable depends so much on the way horses are groomed that I must devote a chapter to this important subject. Old horse-masters used to say that good grooming is equivalent to a feed of corn, and though I used to doubt the truth of this, I saw practical proof of its accuracy on service. I noticed the horses which did most work and still kept condition were those whose owners made the best use of the brush. I have no doubt whatever that horses which require to be in high condition can only be maintained fit for the work required of them by a good system of grooming.

In India syces clean their horses on a different system to that adopted by a good stable lad at home, and of the two I am inclined to favour the Indian system, but it must be remembered that in India every pony has its own syce, whereas in England a stable lad dresses down two or even three ponies. With him time is an item not considered by the syce.

As the English system is universally adopted in troop stables in India, I propose to consider this first.

A horse on high feeding, unless its digestion is assisted by the healthy action of the skin, will soon show signs of irritation, first by rubbing the eyes and ears against any convenient place and then by rubbing the dock and buttocks. To clean the head, nostrils, eyes, ears and dock, therefore, with sponge and water, is the first consideration, finishing with the rubber and brush all over the head, which for this purpose should be released from the head collar. Before replacing the head collar it should be sponged over with soap and water, and when dried clean, it must be replaced.

The next most important part lies in the feet and legs. These should be brushed over, first with the dandy brush and afterwards *polished* with the body brush, especially round the coronets. Brushing the coronets induces an even and healthy growth of the horn of the foot, so noticeable in race-horses and so wanting in others which do not get the same amount of attention. The feet must be cleaned with the hoof pick and dry brush, and must never be washed. In India washing is most harmful. In England it is also wrong, but there, horses being more accustomed to damp, legs do not show the consequences as quickly as in India. I recently visited a stable in India where four out of six horses were unfit for work. After trying to discover the cause, I saw that the English groom in charge had taught the syces to wash the feet whenever they cleaned their horses. Three of the horses were laid up for several months with seedy toe and sand

crack, and the other three had mud fever, the legs being filled and hot, and the skin rough. I mention this typical case to impress my readers how essential it is to keep the legs and feet dry. During the rains this entails considerable manual labour, but is nevertheless essential.

Cleaning the feet and legs is so important that it should be completed before the body and back is commenced. If taken in the reverse order, a man leaves the most important part till the end when his arms and back are tired. Insist, therefore, on the order I recommend, and when visiting the stables, if any man is at work on the body, feel the legs to see if they are smooth and clean, using the thumb round the coronet, and in the hollow above the hock, formed by the Os calsis and the tendon, to see no particles of loosened skin remain. If the groom affirms he has not finished the legs, insist on his doing so before he begins the body. Having finished the legs and feet, the quarters, back, neck and body should be cleaned in the above order, beginning just above the near hock and working *against* the hair up to the ears. At first the dandy brush should be used to remove the caked sweat and to loosen all scurf from the roots of the hair, but most of the real work should be done with the body brush, used with a circular motion *against the hair*. In this way the brush performs three times the work when used with the hair, a fact well known to all hairdressers, who would never think of using the machine brush in any other way. When all

the scurf is removed from every part of the horse, the hair can be polished with the grain, first with the brush, and afterwards with a cloth or leather to give it that bright polished appearance which is the hall-mark of health and good stable management. When cleaned, a sheet can be put on, care being taken that it is not dragged on against the hair, and all four legs bandaged from the coronets to the knees and hocks.

Good grooming is rapid work, and a smart lad will do over a horse in half an hour. The mane and tail must not be omitted, but can be left to the last, especially the tail, because horses enjoy the tail cleaning, and will eat their corn undisturbed during the process. For this reason I prefer to see the tail cleaning carried on after the feeds have been given. To clean hair, the brush only should be used, the hair being separated lock by lock, and brushed out until every hair falls alone and the fingers drawn through them meets with no opposition.

Good stable work depends very much on good supervision, so every horse-owner should know how to examine a horse to see if well cleaned. To do this thoroughly, first stand in front of the horse and rub the hand over the forehead against the hair, round the ears and under the neck and jaws. Standing on the near side bend down, pick up the near forefoot, and after releasing it feel the coronet with finger and thumb and bring the hand up the leg *on the inside*. Feel the breast between the forelegs and move the hand back under the belly, over the

quarters, down to the hock. Keeping the right hand on the hock, pass the left up the thigh and under the flank. Examine the near hind leg and foot, pass the open fingers through the hair of the tail and then draw the right hand up the quarters, back and neck against the hair. Afterwards the off-side may be similarly examined. Any part not clean will show marks of scurf and feel gritty.

I do not mean every horse must be thoroughly examined every day, but to ensure good work every horse must be open to examination every day, and unless some one supervises work it is seldom satisfactory.

Having given in detail the arduous work of grooming as carried out by English grooms, as well as by cavalry soldiers, I will now explain the difference between that and the system employed by a first-class Indian syce. The first part, as far as the completion of the legs, is identical, but before the body is begun, the syce will wring out a wet cloth and damp the hair against the grain. Then standing well away from the horse he puts in an hour's hand rubbing, using the palm, wrist and forearm slightly damped, and rubbing out all old hair and scurf. It is very hard work, and a strong syce, stripped to the buff, will sweat with the exertion. The horse enjoys this massage, and from delight will bite and kick during the process unless tied up. All the belly muscles resist the action of the syce, and by the resistance are strengthened to assist digestion. In fact, an hour's *malish* or

hand rubbing is an hour's exercise for man and horse. After this, the horse is polished over with the body-brush, but even then is not finished, but gets fifteen minutes' *tapee* with heavy leather pads, one in each hand. These are brought down with much force on the shoulders, back and quarters, avoiding the loin, and do much to bring up a muscular development.



To see this work well done, a visit should be paid to the stables of a first-class trainer, after which no further recommendation of the system will be needed, for the result is so noticeable.

Before leaving the subject of syce's work, I must mention the points in which they fail. The subject of dasturi is a difficult one to cope with, and in no department is the custom more pronounced than in an Indian stable. The bunia gives the syce one to one and a half annas per maund consumed, the grass contractor always brings short grass, and this is winked at by the syce who gets his monthly gratuity, and so on with all the other natives who provide articles or do work for the stables. The cause is not far to seek. The syce is a valuable servant and much under paid. If good syces are provided, they must be given gratuities by the master or they will make them at the expense of the horses. Even good syces require supervision, and especially in the cleanliness of the stables and the way the feet are brushed. Unless taught to polish legs and feet and to clean manes and tails, they are inclined

to neglect this part of the grooming. In the same way they must be taught how to preserve leather-work and to brush the panels of saddles and horse clothing.

Carefully taught, the syce is an excellent servant, who really becomes fond of his pony, and whose chief desire is to please his master. Jemadars are necessary evils, and after a time become rapacious. If the syces are well trained, the jemadar's place can always be filled by promoting another syce, until he, in his turn, becomes unbearably greedy. Even with good syces, the eye of the master will always produce the best results. In nothing is this more noticeable than in grooming, and I recommend the novice to visit the stables daily, and whenever possible his visit should take place during the hour for grooming. There is no truer saying than the Arab proverb: "The eye of the master makes the horse fat."

CHAPTER VII

EXERCISE AND WORK

HOWEVER careful an owner may be with regard to stable management, feeding and grooming, he will probably fail to achieve complete success with his stables, unless he understands the principles which govern exercise and work. It is no unusual occurrence for men in India to spend their leisure in muscular exertion daily in order to keep fit, but who never think of giving their horses regular work or even the minimum requirement of exercise.

I propose to discuss this question in relation to feeding, because it must be remembered that to get the work of a race-horse from an animal, he must be fed like a race-horse, but to feed a horse like a race-horse and to give him only the exercise of a hack is to sow the seeds of liver or bilious fever. If we begin with the horse in a state of nature, we find him thriving and looking splendid on nothing but green grass. To attempt to hunt or even hack a horse on grass only would reduce him to the profile of a greyhound. All kinds of work as well as all kinds of corn are unnatural for a horse, but to enable them to work they must have corn. We have,

therefore, to learn how much corn is required to maintain a horse in sufficient muscle to perform the kind of work he is intended for. Secondly, we must learn what is the minimum exercise and work necessary for a horse in muscle consuming a certain allowance of corn to keep him fit.

We have already seen that to bring a horse into big condition, which is the sign of health, easily digested food and mild exercise are necessary. To change a fat to a muscular condition, soft food must be replaced by solid food, but the muscles must at the same time be severely exercised. To render the same animal fit to carry a man at a fast pace, long trotting and slow galloping work must be given, with occasional fast gallops to train the heart and lungs as well as the ligaments and tendons to stand the strain. When once a horse has been in muscle, in short, fit to race, he can be kept fit with little trouble provided he is judiciously worked and fed. Having considered generalities, we now have to apply them to individual cases.

In India most of the horses are imported and arrive in poor condition, usually unhealthy and very weak. Such animals must be fed on what trainers term "slops." This means easily digested food. As much green grass and lucerne as they can eat, and a mild allowance of half bran and crushed oats, with boiled barley, mote or koolthie added. The exercise during this period must be restricted to walking in hand and occasional lunging to open the lungs without causing them to sweat.

As soon as the coat looks bright and healthy, and the ribs and hips are covered, the horse must be gently worked in addition to exercise. I must here explain that exercise is meant to include walking in hand or being ridden at a walk. By work, I include all kinds of muscle-forming exercise, such as trotting, slow galloping, and fast work. It is at this stage that beginners make such fatal mistakes. A horse in fat condition, usually termed "dealers' condition," is unfit for anything but the mildest exercise, and until he can carry a man for two hours hacking at a walk, he is unfit for work. To gallop or even trot a fat horse, which has never been in muscle, is to run the risk of internal strain, which may ruin the horse for life. This is the explanation why the majority of fat ponies purchased from Afghan dealers lose their round appearance at once and can never again recover their fat condition. The overstrain to the heart and lungs has altered their looks from that of a pug dog to that of a greyhound.

When two hours' exercise mounted does not distress a fat horse, it is time to increase his corn and work. A mile trotting daily, increasing gradually to three miles after about a fortnight, will require a similar increase of solid food. As soon as the horse is in good hard condition he is fit for galloping. At first this work should be given at half pace, 15 miles an hour, with an occasional increase of speed at the end of the work. A month of this galloping work should bring a horse to the

highest scale of food given on page 42. It will then be discovered how much solid food each horse will eat. I have tested a whole squadron of 140 horses to see how much they could eat. At first most of them ate 18 lbs. and some as much as 25 lbs. After a few days 16 lbs. was the average. The same horses, during the rains and getting trotting work only, averaged under 12 lbs. On pages 40-42 I have given the average scale of feeds for a 14-1 animal when on slops and when in work. The art of the horse-master is to estimate the requirements of each horse according to the work he has to perform, his state of condition and his age. An old horse requires more food of a sustaining nature, such as gram (or beans in England).

In calculating the feeds, this principle should be recognized: no work, no corn. Thus a horse laid up and unable to get even walking exercise should get 8 lbs. of bran and no corn. If led in hand only, 2 lbs. of oats may be added, and if ridden to exercise 4 lbs. When the corn is decreased, the grass ration must be increased, even up to 50 lbs. a day. It is well to remember that with the exception of horses in training for races and a few exceptional horses which become very gross, horses in India should be given as much grass or hay as they care to eat. A horse in training will not eat 12 lbs., but the same horse when "let down" and having a limited supply of oats will eat 30 to 40 lbs. of grass daily.

Whenever horses are thrown out of work even

temporarily the corn must be cut. For example, troop horses which do not leave the lines on Thursdays and Sundays should be fed on bran during these days. Polo ponies and others not working on Sundays should get 24 hours of bran, *i.e.*, from 6 p.m. on Saturday night to 6 p.m. on Sunday. Not only is this change of food economical, but it is also most beneficial as a rest to the digestive organs. Owners going on short absences of a week or ten days, should either leave instructions regarding the daily work or else put the whole stable on slops. To give solid food to horses thrown out of fast work is the most fruitful cause in India of bilious fever, and many race-horses have been lost annually owing to this alone.

After a severe physical course of training, rest is required for brain and muscles. Similarly, during and after a course of high feeding, the digestive powers want periodical rests. After a polo tournament, for example, ponies should have at least a week's rest on slops and walking exercise. Similarly, troop horses after the annual manoeuvres should get a fortnight's "letting down." This term is the usual expression in training stables for the periodical rests race-horses require after a severe preparation, and refers to the bellies, which are reduced to a minimum for racing, but which must be allowed to resume normal proportions from time to time to avoid the risk of the horses becoming "over marked" or stale.

To reduce the foregoing to practical instruction,

we must divide the state of all horses and ponies in classes as regards work and feeding.

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| <p>1. Horses in poor condition and those thrown out of work for rest or other causes, exercise only.</p> | <p>Feed on slops with as much dried grass as they can eat and a liberal allowance of lucerne.</p> |
| <p>2. Horses in half work, such as hacks, hunters and polo ponies not in training: two hours exercise or slow work in addition to riding or driving.</p> | <p>Feed on solid food and ample grass. The amount of corn to be regulated by the requirements of each animal.</p> |
| <p>3. Horses in training for hunting, polo tournaments or racing: work once a day and exercise once a day.</p> | <p>As much solid food, oats and a small proportion of gram or parched barley, as they can eat. Grass restricted only if animal is gross and does not reduce naturally.</p> |

I am quite aware that it is not customary in India to put hunters and polo ponies into training as is always done in England. In India, the work they get playing fast polo three times a week and hunting two or three times a week puts them into fair training automatically or breaks them down. It is to improve their condition and to avoid the large proportion of break-downs we see in this country,

that I lay such stress on the importance of training. It is no unusual thing to see valuable polo studs which never get any work except on the polo ground, and which, on off days, are led in hand by syces for short periods. If these ponies were trotted three or four miles daily in addition to the 15 minutes' polo they get three times a week, they would not only be easier to play in the game, but being fit, would break down or lose condition much more seldom. I consider two hours' exercise and slow work daily is the minimum that horses and ponies require to keep them fit, and this exercise should be mounted. Leading in hand is only suitable for horses out of condition, for rest days (Sundays), and for race-horses for whom work once a day is enough.

The estimate of work and feeding can only be thoroughly learnt by experience, but I hope the hints contained in this article will serve as a guide and enable my readers to acquire the art of training their animals without the losses which such experience is liable to cost. Attention to the principles of stable management, feeding and work constitutes the art of the horse-master. The result is a healthy and happy stable and a very economical change in the cost of their maintenance.

CHAPTER VIII

SADDLERY AND POLO GEAR

WHEN obtaining an Indian outfit, there are so many necessities to be purchased that saddlery is often overlooked, and yet saddlery of some sort is a necessity out here. To any one intending to choose polo as his recreation in India, it is an economy to bring out a complete set of saddlery and polo gear for three ponies. If well selected, these last for his whole lifetime, and save much in the monthly bill for repairs. It is false economy to go to any but the best makers, even if the initial cost is larger. I cannot resist recommending the firm of Sowter & Co., Haymarket, for polo saddles, even at the risk of my readers thinking I hold a brief for them. There are several firms in London just as good, or perhaps better, for hunting saddles, but for light, strong polo saddles, suitable for India, have not met their equal. That this is the general opinion in India is evident, because any second-hand Sowter polo saddle is always snapped up at once, even when advertised at only 10 per cent. below cost price. I remember buying an old Sowter saddle in the Mhow bazaar 15 years ago.

It must then have been 15 years old, as the leather was patched in many places. Recently I had it recovered, and it still remains one of my tournament saddles, and is a sample of the excellent work of their firm.

The following saddlery is recommended for India. This should be packed in a tin-lined case, otherwise the damp of the hold on board ship may affect the leather and panels.

POLO GEAR FOR THREE PONIES

- 3 Saddles, two 10 lb. and one 12 lb.
- 3 Double bridles.
- 3 Martingales, two noseband, standing, and one running.
- 3 Sets thick horse clothing.
- 3 Sets Newmarket bandages.
- 3 Sets polo boots, elastic covered.
- 3 Head collars, stable.
- 2 Pairs horse-clippers.

In India, I think 10 lb. saddles are the best, but it is as well to have one bigger for hunting, etc., when a smaller saddle will not bear the weight for a long time as well. There is a tendency towards the leather-lined panels, having nothing beneath the flap. I do not approve of these, first, because the leather lining does not last well in India, and, secondly, the half-panels do not distribute the weight over so large a surface as the full panels, which put some of the weight on the ribs.

I find the best girths are split leather. They are easily cleaned, do not gall, and seem to last for ever. Web girths soon deteriorate in India, and are apt to cut ponies whose shoulders are not all they might be. Stirrup-leathers should be very solid, for much weight is put on them at polo, and a snap may mean a bad accident. Patent stirrup fastenings are a mistake, and quite unnecessary. Whatever the weight of a polo saddle may be, care should be taken that the stirrup irons are large and fairly heavy. Even the finest horsemen continually lose a stirrup at polo, and unless the weight of the iron is sufficient to bring it back to the foot it may be some time before the rider can regain it.

Now comes the question of the best bridles for India, and those I recommend are as follows. Remember that bits last for twenty years, and cannot be too good. At the present time my favourite bit is one sent out to me in Egypt in 1885, and which is still just as serviceable. I mention this fact to impress on my readers how carefully bits should be selected.

The best bit of all for polo is the Banbury double bridle, with short cheeks, sliding bar, and a straight piece-mouth, corrugated on one side. I prefer no sign of a port at all, though I admit that ponies that have been broken with a port bit will probably require a similar one. The second bridle, therefore, should be similar but slightly heavier and with a very mild port. Instead of a bridoon a gag-snaffle should be substituted, this being a most

useful as well as a most humane kind of bit. I admit this is not the general opinion, but it is nevertheless the case.

The third bit I recommend is the half-moon Pelham, but with a sliding bar. For polo the sliding bar is a great advantage, as there is not so much jar on the mouth, and the bar moving when the reins are pulled, breaks the force of the strain. Even the best riders are bound to use force at polo, and any contrivance to alleviate the pain should be employed. For this reason I prefer the straight bar to the port, as with the former the tongue acts as a cushion and takes a portion of the weight which, with a port, comes straight on to the bars of the mouth. For the same reason, I prefer the sliding bar, and from experience I know that many well-bred ponies will not play in the rigid bar, as the pain, being too sudden, drives them mad.

Bitting is so important a subject that I have devoted a whole chapter to it, and must refer my readers to Chapter XIII.

In India, martingales are a necessity. I admit that ponies, if perfectly broken, should not require a martingale, but so few ponies reach this state of perfection that some such mechanical assistance is required in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred. At home, ponies are better bred and better trained than in India, and martingales are not so generally necessary, though even there I notice most players use them. The running martingale is condemned by most writers on horsemanship, but from experience

I know that it is a most valuable help. If the hands were always perfectly placed, there would be no use for the martingale; but at polo the hand is never in its place for a minute at a time, and this fault is, to a large extent, counterbalanced by the running martingale. The martingale should be used on the reins of the bit and not on the reins of the bridoon, as most saddlers appear to think. Both reins, therefore, should be buckled, to admit of either being put through the rings of the martingale.

The standing martingale acts in a different way, being an appliance to keep the head from being raised to avoid the pain of the bit.

Standing martingales are either attached to a noseband or to the rings of the bridoon. The latter method is much more severe, and in any but good hands is apt to be cruel, as it may seriously injure the bars of the mouth. Saddlers usually put the adjusting buckle of the standing martingale below the chest. In this position it takes some time to adjust. It is much better to have the martingale made in two pieces, the buckle being just above the breast bone (Plate I).

To convert a noseband martingale to one attached to the rings of the bridoon all that is required is a small strap, about 18 inches long. This passes twice through the loop of the martingale and through each ring of the bridoon.

Horse-clothing can be obtained in India for half the price of English clothing, but as the latter

lasts four times as long as Indian made rugs, it is an economy to bring it out, and of course it always looks better.

Polo boots are, I think, more protection for the legs than bandages. I disapprove of them when made with leather, but if made with strong elastic cloth, over thin numdah, they are excellent. The elastic acts as a perfect support, and ponies cannot be lamed by a careless syce drawing a buckle too tight.

Horse-clippers are a necessity. Ponies cannot do fast work with long coats and maintain their condition. With horses liable to stand in the open, exposed to cold by night and the sun by day, it is better not to clip after December 15th in the plains, as the new coats begin to show towards the end of January, but polo ponies can be clipped much later. In fact, whenever ponies sweat from having too long a coat, the clippers should be run over them.

It must be remembered that in India saddlery deteriorates very quickly unless care is taken with it.

In spite of this, if well kept, it lasts as long as at home. I therefore recommend polo players to get none but the best saddlery, and to insist on its being maintained in good condition.

CHAPTER IX

TRAINING PONIES TO POLO

BEFORE a pony is fit to play in a match there are many stages of training through which he must pass, and the final result depends on the thorough manner he is taught in each stage.

These stages may be summarized into:—

1. Making the pony quiet to ride with good mouth and manners.
2. Breaking to stick and ball.
3. Balancing and finishing.
4. Developing the natural paces, and teaching the pony those indescribable arts which make so much difference in tournament polo.

Of all these stages the most important is the first, for it is the foundation on which the others must be built. With an unsound foundation the work will always be disappointing. I admit many famous polo ponies are infamous hacks, and are no pleasure to ride off the polo ground, but these are exceptions. The vast number of ponies which have been spoilt in their training are the result of the first and most important stage having been neglected.

I advise my readers never to buy a pony, made or unmade, without a good mouth and manners. If such are desirable at a price, the price should be under 50 per cent. of what it would be worth if mouth and manners were good.

The fact of the market value of a pony varying 100 per cent. according to its mouth and manners is the best possible inducement for all polo players to acquire a thorough knowledge of training. This knowledge may not be indispensable for the few who can afford to buy none but the best-trained ponies, but even these will not maintain a high standard of efficiency in the hands of a player totally ignorant of the art of training.

There are many ways of training and mouthing horses, and most of these systems succeed in proportion to the skill and experience of the trainer. Some systems are suitable only for horses which have been ridden, others for unbroken horses which are required at once. Again, many horses are trained, or rather rough-broken, with little regard to the future, and most of these are partial failures.

After a long experience, I feel more confidence in the following system than others I have tried. It is suitable equally to the unbroken colt, the rough-broken remount in a dealer's yard, the pony which has been raced, and even the pony which has been spoilt.

Once mastered, a matter of about a month, a novice will find he can not only break in any newly-landed pony, but that every animal which passes through his hands increases in value.

Of all animals, the most difficult to train is the well-bred nervous colt that has never been saddled, and I will, therefore, deal with this class.

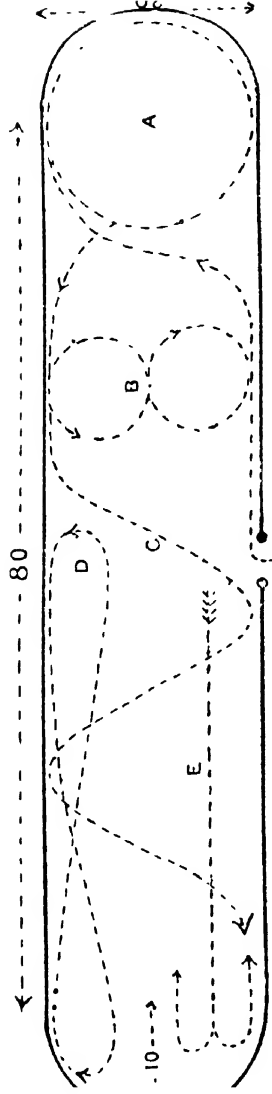
The best age to train young ponies depends on the time available for their training, but to obtain the best results they should be worked before fully grown ; in short, before six years of age. The best results are obtained by the custom in force in Irish-breeding farms. There, the colt is stabled during its first winter, and handled to overcome his instinctive fear of man. In the spring, he is again turned out, and remains at grass throughout his second and third winter. As a three-year-old, he is caught up and put into training.

Between the ages of three and five, a colt is easier to train and develops muscle quicker than if less mature, or fully grown, but, of course, the work must be very light at first, until the tendons and ligaments are capable of greater strain.

To hurry a remount during its first three months training is false economy, for any slight strain or loss of condition will cause a delay and may seriously affect the result. Unless the health and condition is maintained at its highest during the training, and even improved, the pony is probably being overworked or improperly fed.

The training of a remount, whether unbroken or partly trained, should be carried out on a clearly defined system which embraces every requisite of the polo pony. The first stage should be to establish complete confidence between the pony and his

Polo Training School, 80 yards by 20 yards



Dotted lines represent useful figures for training Ponies.

A.—Circle.

B.—Figure of Eight

C.—Spiral

D—Long figure of Eight

E.—Stopping and Turning.

Manwall 18" high round raised to 3 feet at each end.

trainer. It is clear that until this object is attained no progress can be expected.

The second part of the training should be devoted to mouthing, bending the neck to the bit, and teaching the pony to walk in hand. It is folly to mount a pony before he understands the use of the bit. He has only to plunge and bolt, and though he may be unable to unseat the rider, his mouth and temper may be ruined for life.

The third phase of his training is occupied in making the pony a pleasant hack at slow paces. When a pony can be ridden with sagging reins at a walk, trot, and canter in the school, and is equally quiet in the open, he is fit for the higher education.

The fourth, and perhaps the most important part of the pony's training, lies in teaching him to hold himself in equilibrium at slow paces. When this is learnt, the horse should daily be put through a few of the balancing exercises, to accustom him to carry himself and his rider instead of expecting his rider to carry him. These balancing exercises, which will be fully described later, are most necessary to complete the pony's physical development, to give him manners and to make him perfect as a hack.

It will be found almost essential to provide an enclosed place in which to commence the training. Walls 5 to 6 feet high are desirable, but not a necessity. In the absence of any place that can be improvised, it may be advisable to build a manège.

If so, the smallest suitable dimensions are as follows for a circular school: Internal diameter

25 yards, walls of dried mud 4 feet high, but 6 feet is recommended. The entrance may have two bars similar to the usual stable bars and a light grass hurdle to lean against the bars. This will prevent a remount from having his attention distracted by anything outside.

I prefer a circular school of these dimensions to any other.

FIRST PHASE

Teaching the Remount to have Confidence in his Trainer

The majority of young horses are nervous, and the later in life they are trained the more difficult will it be to establish that confidence so essential to successful training. The better bred they are, the more nervous of the trainer they will be ; but on the other hand, if properly taught, such horses learn quicker and become more highly trained. Some horses, if caught up late in life, may have to be roped and thrown before they can be fitted with a head-collar. This will, however, very seldom occur, but if other means fail, throwing is unavoidable.

The remount, as soon as he can be handled enough to fit him with a bridle, should be led into an enclosed space. The trainer should then work alone. Assistants may be necessary sometimes, but the remount should realize from the first that he has to deal with his trainer only, and will get to know him and have confidence in him the sooner if he works alone.

It is better to begin all training in a plain snaffle, which should be large and smooth.

Lunging is the best way to gain the confidence of an untrained horse provided it is possible to approach his head without danger of being struck. The reins are first taken over the head, and having been passed through the throat-lash, are again placed over the head. This keeps them clear of the horse's feet. A lunging rein is then buckled on to the near ring of the bridoon. Holding this in the left hand, and the long whip in the right, the horse is driven in a circle to the left for a few minutes. The action of the whip behind the horse will teach him to fear the whip, and that the whip is intended to make him move forward. At first the horse may refuse to move in circle, but if taken quietly he can soon be taught he must obey from fear of punishment. He must next be taught that when the trainer ceases to propel him with the whip he must stop and come up to the trainer. This is done by drawing in the lunging rein, and when the horse gets near, the trainer must walk backwards and hold his whip perpendicular until the horse walks up to it. If he refuses to do so, the lash dropped lightly on his hocks will send him forward. As soon as the horse comes up to the hand, he must be caressed on the neck and eyes, and rewarded by some dainty.

After circling to both hands a few times it will be found that some confidence will have been established even in the first half hour. In a few days, during which he should get two lessons of half an hour

every day, the horse will have lost his instinctive fear of the trainer, and will be ready to proceed with the next stage of his education.

With very wild colts, a very effective plan is to turn the remount loose in a circular manège with walls 6 to 8 feet high.

A platform about 1½ feet high in the centre enables the trainer to drive the colt round until tired. After this, the offer of a dainty will usually be accepted, and mutual confidence will be commenced. After a few lessons the bit can be put on and the reins attached to a roller until lunging, as already described, becomes possible.

In this manner the wildest and most nervous animal can be tamed, but care must be taken that the work given is not in excess of what the legs and constitution of the horse can stand. It is advisable, as soon as the colt will allow his legs to be touched, to invariably use polo boots, whenever the remount is worked. The best pattern is made of numdah, well up to the knees and below the fetlocks, with a strong elastic band 6 inches wide secured by four straps and buckles.

I cannot approve of the practice of throwing remounts to give them confidence in the trainer. I admit it has this effect in time, but I consider it liable to produce accidents, and induces fear at first.

Driving with long reins is another method usually successful, and if the trainer is an artist with long reins, horses can be very quickly broken in this way. It has one great disadvantage. It

encourages the horse to carry his head low, and this is contrary to the great principle of balance.

There are several other rough-and-ready methods of quieting unbroken horses, but none, in my opinion, is as effective as the system already described. This system, introduced by Franconi and perfected by Fillis, produces better results and gives fewer failures than any of the quicker methods adopted by various horse-tamers.

After a few lunging lessons the pony will invariably walk up to the trainer, when the whip is held up perpendicular and the pony called in to the centre. It will also be found that the pony will follow the trainer all about the school if he walks backwards with the whip up. In under a week the lunging rein may be dispensed with and the remount will easily learn to walk or trot free and come up to the trainer when called. When this becomes an established habit several ponies may be turned in together, first with lunging reins and later with free heads.

I have seen a ride of twelve cavalry remounts walking, trotting, and cantering free in a manège of these dimensions, with the twelve trainers in the centre. The instructor from time to time nominated a man to call his horse in, the remainder continuing to walk round. In the end all were facing inwards to the centre. I mention this to show it requires no specialist to train horses in the first stage, that of acquiring absolute confidence in and affection for their trainer.

SECOND PHASE

Mouthing and Profile

There are several ways of giving a horse a good mouth. A good rider can do this in most cases by riding only ; an indifferent rider can effect the same by driving on foot ; but to give a horse a good mouth and at the same time to place his head and neck in equilibrium, requires all the art of the trainer. Few horses in a state of nature carry the head as we require it when mounted. Having no weight to carry, and having no need to acquire habits of endurance, they do not naturally raise the crest as they should, and as they can be made to do with training. A well-balanced horse, therefore, in order to relieve the forehead from undue weight, should raise the crest, but lower the muzzle until the frontal bone is between 45° and 90° with the horizontal or ground line. To acquire this profile or placing of the head and neck, the trainer must raise the head by means of the bridoon and lower the muzzle by the pressure of the bit and curb. This exercise of the muscles of the neck and jaw is called " flexion " by artists of the High School (*Haute Ecole*), and " bending " by " rough riders," who seldom understand its value.

Flexion may be direct flexion, or the bending of the head towards the breast, and lateral flexion, or the bending of the head and upper part of the neck to one side.

Direct flexion can be taught at the halt or on

the move, mounted or dismounted. Lateral flexion must first be taught dismounted.

In our first lesson the horse was taught to move forward when held at the end of a lunging rein and driven up by the whip. He was also taught to come up fearlessly to the trainer. The value of this lesson is now to be explained in the second lesson.

The trainer must now teach the horse to lead in hand. To do this, horses must never be pulled along at the end of the snaffle reins, but *pushed* along by the snaffle, assisted by the cutting whip. The reins are taken over the head, and the left hand seizes the rein at the join, and the right hand grasps the reins close behind the jaw with the forefinger separating the reins. The horse is then pushed forward, the trainer standing opposite the near fore of the young horse, which should be close to the wall of the school. A cutting whip in the left hand now assists the trainer to impel the horse forward by a touch close behind the girth. At first, a click with the tongue is a help, but as the object of this lesson is to force the horse to move forward to the whip, it is the touch of the whip that should be employed. The remount will now move forward or resist. He cannot swing his quarters to the right as the wall prevents him, or to the left as he receives punishment from the whip. He can, therefore, only run back or lie down. If he runs back, the trainer should bend his knees and put all the strain he can on the bridoon reins. After a few backward steps, the horse will stop, and a

touch on the hocks from the long whip will bring him up, as learnt in his first lesson. If he lies down, a shake of the reins and a touch of the whip will prove to him that obedience is the only way to avoid punishment. Of course, punishment should only be used when unavoidable. Rewards do far more towards success than punishment. The horse, on moving forward, must now have his head held high, and be kept up by repeated touches of the cutting whip, to accustom him to the feel of the leg when mounted.

A few lessons of this work to both hands go far in the direction we are following, namely the high carriage of the neck and the bending of the head at the poll, a few inches behind the ears. A timid horse must be frequently encouraged by being allowed to walk freely beside the trainer with drooping head, but when driven up, must march at attention. The slouching walk will soon give place to the brisk active high-stepping walk, and the mouthing of the horse will proceed automatically.

As soon as the remount will walk out as described, in the open as well as in the school, he should be taught to bend his neck to the pressure of the bit, and to release the jaw. This is called Direct Flexion.

Before describing how direct flexion is acquired, I wish to impress on my readers the object of these bending exercises. Just as a round-shouldered recruit with slouching walk and a head hanging forward can be taught to hold himself erect and to march lightly and gracefully, so can the heaviest

forehand of a young remount be raised, and the pony taught to carry himself in equilibrium by direct flexion. A pony with a low carriage of the neck and a nose pointing to the front may have a good mouth, but as the weight is too much in front, he must be heavy on the hand. As he places too much weight on the forehand, fast work will produce lameness from splints and ringbone.

The chief objects of direct flexion are :—

1. To balance the horse by regulating the height of the neck, and to teach him to acquire the correct profile.

2. To teach the horse to bend his neck at the poll on application of the bit, and to carry his head lightly.

3. To obtain increased lightness by the relaxed muscles or flexion of the jaw.

To make this clear I will use the illustration of a fishing rod, which, if held by the thin end is an unwieldy article, the weight being wrongly placed ; if held at the heavy end, however, it becomes a very delicate instrument.

Like the fishing rod, the horse's head and neck may be divided into four parts. The butt end is represented by the lower part of the neck ; the second joint, by the neck up to within a few inches of the ears ; the third joint, by the upper part of the neck ; and the point of the rod, by the lower jaw of the horse. The reins represent the line.

It is evident to any angler that unless the upper joints of the rod have more pliability than the butt

end, the rod would be useless. So a well-trained horse must have greater delicacy in the suppleness of the jaw and at the poll than in the neck where it is thick.

It will be found that a perfect flexion is seldom obtained with the snaffle, but it is advisable to accustom the pony to this mild bit before using the double-bridle. As soon, however, as the remount is mouthed to the snaffle, and is sufficiently advanced to be saddled and mounted, work in the saddle, as described later, should be with snaffle only, and at the same time work on foot should go on, but with a double-bridle. This should be, if possible, a short-cheeked sliding bar bit with a straight bar without port. The curb should lie flat in the chin groove, and be sufficiently tight so that the bit, when drawn back, should form, with the bit strap, an angle of from 90° to 135° .

At first the pony may be taught to give to the pressure of the bit when halted, but as soon as he learns to bend the neck and jaw to relieve himself from the pressure, his further education should be continued when on the move.

The bridoon reins having been taken over the head, they are held by the left hand at the join, the right hand grasps both reins close behind the jaw, and the horse is propelled forward by means of a cutting whip as already described.

The remount, having been taught to move briskly forward, with crest erect, when held in hand and driven up with the cutting whip, is now taught to

do so when the snaffle reins are held close in front of his nose with the left hand. This releases the lower jaw from all pressure of the snaffle. As soon as the colt will move forward bodily when pulled along by the bridoon reins, he is ready to learn the action of the bit. If the right hand now takes the bit-reins, separated by the forefinger, thumb upwards, the horse will bend his neck, and also release the lower jaw to avoid the pain of the bit and curb. The left hand should draw the horse forward in a horizontal direction, the right hand should draw the bit reins upwards, the elbow pointing down and resting against the shoulder of the horse. During all this training, which may take a fortnight or three weeks, the left hand should hold the snaffle reins at the join as well as the cutting whip.

Horses must be worked equally to both sides, the hands, of course, being reversed when the horse is on the right rein, or moving to the right, to what they were when moving on the left rein.

With an unbroken horse, it will be found that the upper neck and jaw gives freely to direct flexion, as now explained. With horses whose mouths are past their natural delicacy these methods may have little effect, and with any but unbroken colts or horses with naturally delicate mouths I recommend the following alternative which I have found infallible. No horse, however hard in the mouth, is able to resist this method, nor can I recall a single case which was not vastly improved by it.

The bit rein is crossed in the palm of the trainer's

right hand, about six inches from the near cheek of the bit. The off bit rein is drawn tight round the base of the neck, close in front of the wither, and lies in the hand above the near bit rein. The back of the hand should be upward, thumb pointing to the horse's mouth, elbow down towards the horse's shoulder.

If the hand holding the reins is now turned thumb upwards, it will be found that both cheeks of the bit are drawn back equally, and the pressure of the bit and curb will be applied gradually to the horse's jaw.

At first he will raise the head to avoid the pain ; but finding this increases the pain, he will either rear or bend the head downwards.

If he rears, the right hand must be released and the bridoon rein, held always at the join in the left hand, will easily pull the horse to the ground. It may take five minutes the first time to induce the horse to bend to the pressure of the bit, but after once giving to it, and being rewarded by complete release of the bit reins, and by being patted on the neck, he will soon learn to release the lower jaw to the slightest pressure of the bit with very little practice. Any one can soon learn this method, and can bend the neck, giving and taking, by raising and lowering the thumb of the right hand in which the bit reins are crossed.

As soon as a horse does this freely halted, he must be taught to do it on the move, the left hand drawing him forward with the bridoon reins, and

the right hand bending his neck at the poll with the bit reins.

Until a horse will do this in the open, without the assistance of the walls of the school, he is not ready for the next lesson.

It is all-important that the remount should know what the trainer requires of him. As soon, therefore, as he gives, even in the smallest degree, the trainer should pat him on the neck, release the reins, and allow him to walk round the school free of restraint. In the first lesson in bending, the trainer should be content with five or six very imperfect flexions, but if the remount has learnt in these what is required of him his further training will proceed rapidly.

Though direct flexion is recommended on the move, some horses will refuse to bend until halted. If humoured a few times until they know what is required, they will learn to bend when moving forward.

As soon as the remount is perfect in direct flexion, releasing the jaw as well as bending the neck, and will carry his head between 45° and 60° with the horizontal, the trainer should complete the flexions by walking him round as taught with the snaffle earlier in the chapter, but holding the bit as well as the bridoon reins in the right hand. The bit reins, little finger between, are passed through the right hand, upwards. The bridoon reins pass together through the right hand downwards to the left hand, which also holds the whip. The left hand,

by tightening the bridoon reins, puts the horse on the snaffle, the right hand puts him on the bit. A brisk walk will soon teach the remount to carry his head high, and the pressure of the bit will bring the frontal bone at an angle from 60° to 90° with the horizontal.

Until the remount has learnt to give to direct flexion, he should not be mounted, but get the exercise necessary for health and obedience on the lunge. As soon, however, as the horse gives to the bit he should be ridden every day.

If the training on foot has been successful, the horse will at once give to the bit mounted. If he will not do so, the dismounted training is incomplete and must be prolonged.

It is not wise to mount a raw pony until he is perfectly quiet and understands the use of the bit. To do so is to risk spoiling the pony, and even if not entirely ruined, he will be thrown back in his training.

Making the Remount into a good Hack

I now propose to deal with the training of ponies to be good hacks: that is, easy and comfortable to ride, alone and in company, on roads, and in the open, at slow paces.

The remount having arrived at the stage of being mounted, unless already broken to saddle, must be treated with the greatest care the first few days he is saddled. Though I disapprove of force being used during training, I prefer to strap up a foreleg before putting the saddle on, because if the horse

once bucks the saddle off (and remember this is possible even after girthing up), he may contract the bad habit of bucking and never be a safe mount. After being saddled and unsaddled a few times with the foreleg strapped up, the strap may be removed and the remount lunged a few minutes with the saddle stripped. At the next lesson, this is repeated with stirrups hanging, the leathers being crossed over the seat. Later on, in the same lesson, if the young horse shows no fear, the stirrups are allowed to swing against the side.

After a few days lunging with the saddle, the remount may be mounted. Before a man mounts, the saddle, if no buck-jumping saddle is available, should be prepared by having a roll of blanket or stiff cloth strapped across the pommel to assist the rider if the remount plays up. The off-fore being strapped up, the trainer puts weight on the stirrup, rising and dismounting frequently, until he can carry his right leg over without frightening the horse. When in the saddle, he must lean to the left so as not to overbalance the horse, which is on three legs.

If the remount shows fear of the man, this lesson must be repeated, but if quiet, the strap on the foreleg may be removed and the trainer can mount. In doing this, he must raise himself into the saddle without a jerk, an assistant holding the horse by the head-collar, *not* by the bridle. When the rider is in the saddle, the horse should be turned round, and started at once without giving him time to stand and buck or rear. If allowed to walk round the school

quietly for a few minutes, and then dismounted and made much of, the remount will not associate being mounted with pain or fear, and will afterwards give no trouble. The duration the trainer remains in the saddle can gradually be increased from 3 or 4 minutes at first, to half-an hour after about a week, provided the back shows no signs of becoming tender.

Until the remount is absolutely quiet in the enclosed school, he should not be taken out into the open. To do so might cause the rider to be unseated by a sudden shy or buck, or the horse may become frightened and bolt. Any such accident at the beginning of his training may prove fatal to attaining the object in view, namely, a reliable and comfortable hack.

When first mounted, a large smooth snaffle should be used until the remount has become a good hack. Work on foot, which should also be given daily during this period of training, should be with double bridle.

When first ridden, the immediate object of the training, is for the remount to walk with long, regular strides ; to stop and stand still when checked with the snaffle ; to go forward when pressed up with the legs, without any tendency to trot or jog ; and to turn to any direction when the head is pulled that way. This part of the training cannot be too elementary. If combined with the more advanced training mounted, the remount is liable to become excitable.

remount may be trotted in the open.

When a horse trots, he moves in diagonals. The near-fore and off-hind, called the left diagonal, are raised and placed on the ground together. The off-fore and near-hind are called the right diagonal. When the rider rises at the trot, he always employs the same diagonal unconsciously. This is usually the left diagonal, and it is the right hock being straightened that raises the weight of the rider. With riders who know nothing about diagonals or how to change from one diagonal to another, it is evident a horse will soon tire at a trot, one hock and thigh becoming stiff. If, however, the rider changes the diagonal every mile, the work becomes equally distributed and a horse can go on trotting for long distances. To change the diagonal, the rider must allow his seat to bump the saddle twice instead of once, and he will then find he is rising and falling with the other fore-leg. At first it will be found that trotting on the other diagonal is most uncomfortable, but a few days' practice will make one as easy as the other. The distribution of work by changing the diagonal every half mile will enable a horse to travel many miles without a break and without distress.

This preliminary training will be much assisted by allowing several ponies to work together as a ride, the leader being a trained pony. They will soon learn to follow a steady leader without any desire to increase the pace, until they acquire the habit of being ridden with a free head.

As this part of his training may take six weeks to two months, the preliminary work on foot, direct and lateral flexion, should be carried on at the same time.

In England, lateral flexion has not received the attention given to it on the Continent. I will therefore describe its object, and how to teach it in detail.

The chief object of lateral flexion, is to teach a horse to maintain perfect balance in all changes of direction. It is natural for all animals, as well as human beings, to look towards a new direction and for the body to follow. No horse in a state of nature ever looks one way and moves to the opposite flank. In spite of this, unless trained by lateral flexion, first dismounted, afterwards mounted, horses will turn and circle like a ship, rather than like a motor car. No horse should be considered well trained that does not maintain the high carriage of the neck when changing direction, or which does not slightly bend the head towards the new direction.

A loose horse that looks to the left when his body is moving to the right, or vice versa, would be thought to have something wrong with his brain, commonly called staggers. And yet the

proportion of polo ponies which bend to the direction in which they are moving is very small. In cantering to the right, a horse's head should be slightly bent to the right, so that the rider can just see his right eye.

The art of successful training is to teach horses to improve their natural paces. It is natural for a horse to look the way he is going, and in any change of direction to follow the lead of his head. This training becomes easy to every horse whose neck is supplied by lateral flexion, and who has been taught to bend to the slightest pressure on one side of the mouth more than on the other. In short, no horse can move gracefully as well as smoothly in changes of direction unless so trained.

Lateral flexion is taught as follows. To make the lateral flexion to the right, the trainer should stand close to the near shoulder and take the reins of the snaffle in the left hand, and those of the bit in the right hand, exactly as laid down for the direct flexion. The neck and head should be placed in the same position as in direct flexion, and produce a perfect direct flexion. When the jaw is relaxed, and the flexion complete, push the head of the horse to the right by light blows of the snaffle held high and acting from rear to front. At the same time the right hand feels the bit reins lightly, the right rein the stronger, until a bend of the neck at the poll is produced to one side, and the two reins of the bit, acting equally, give and maintain the play of the jaw, which ought to be the same as in the direct

flexion. At first one must be content with a semblance of obedience. Provided that the horse turns the head only very slightly to the right and opens the jaw, it is all that one should expect at the commencement. The first inclination to obedience must be rewarded by patting the horse on the neck and releasing the reins. This exercise must be often recommenced ; the trainer should never use force, and be content with a little progress at each lesson. One must be careful in making this lateral flexion not to interfere with the equilibrium of the horse. As a matter of fact, the horse has a natural tendency to counterbalance the action of the flexion by throwing his weight on to the shoulder opposite to the bend, and rest the whole forehead on the near fore, for instance, if the bend is to the right. This is unavoidable to a certain extent as long as the jaw resists ; but immediately the jaw yields, its flexion, carrying with it that of the neck, restores the equal distribution of the weight over the two legs. If one allows the horse to acquire the habit of loading the shoulder opposite to the bend, equilibrium will be destroyed, and with it lightness. In changes of direction, as in work on two tracks (*i.e.*, passaging, &c.), the outward shoulder will always be in rear. In these movements the great difficulty is to keep this shoulder moving ; one should always try to lighten it, making only a very light bend, while the outward rein of the snaffle should be felt to throw the weight on the inward shoulder (which has the least ground to cover), the whole mass being inclined at each step

towards the hand to which you are working. It is this which allows one to attain very free movement in the work on two tracks. Too great a bend would check onward movement by overloading the outward shoulder. It sounds astonishing, at the outset, to hear that the bend to the right overloads the left (or near) shoulder. It is, however, the natural result of the horse trying to counterbalance the force employed in asking certain action from him. Any attempt to use force in these lateral bending lessons will inevitably aggravate the tendency to overload the opposite shoulder. When a complete lateral flexion can be produced to either side, the horse looking at right angles to the axis of his body, he must be taught lateral flexion mounted.

These lateral bending lessons mounted are executed on the move. It should be a hard and fast rule that, once mounted, the trainer should never demand anything from horses in the way of instruction of this sort, except when on the move.

When mounted, in order to bend the neck to the right, the left bridoon rein, tightened and carried to the right, keeps the head high. Being pressed against the upper part of the neck, it pushes the head from left to right, while the off bit rein, drawn slightly back, aids this movement and relaxes the jaw.

In order to propel the body of the horse forward, both legs should be applied, the leg opposite the side to which the head is bent being applied the stronger, as the agent of direction.

At first the bend of the head from the poll should be well defined, but later on in the training, only a slight displacement of the muzzle away from the long axes of the horse, towards the new direction, should be demanded.

When the remount is a good hack with the snaffle at slow paces, and has been taught direct and lateral flexion with the bit, he can be taught to place himself in balance. To attempt to balance a horse before he bends to the bit and before he understands that the pressure of the legs to his sides indicates a forward movement, would mean only disappointment for the trainer and irritation for the remount.

I now presume the young pony is a good hack and can be ridden with loose rein at a walk and trot, and will bend to the bit at the will of the trainer both on foot and when in the saddle.

Equilibrium

The term equilibrium or balance is generally misunderstood even by men accustomed to all kinds of sport connected with horses. A well-balanced, collected horse is so rare with us that few have ever had the opportunity of riding one.

Some horses are charming to ride across country or on the polo ground, owing to having been well taught by trainers who understood the art of breaking. Others from conformation and breeding acquire equilibrium almost naturally; but I wish to impress on my readers that all young horses, and almost all old horses as well, can be taught to hold

demanded of him whenever called upon to place himself in equilibrium.

The horse must now learn, when called upon, to become properly placed at a trot as well as he was at a walk, with the crest high and the head between 60° and 90° with the horizontal. It is in this position that a horse can maintain a continued trot for many miles without undue fatigue, and too much care cannot be given to training every remount to acquire it.

As soon as the horse can maintain equilibrium at the cadenced walk and trot even for a short distance, he should be trained to perform the next balancing exercise. This consists of the side steps, which are first taught as follows.

Rotation of croup and shoulders

Before a horse can be taught the side steps, he must be trained to obey the legs as well as the reins. This training is first given on foot. The forehand is supported by being held by the trainer on foot, and the touch of the whip teaches the horse to move his quarters.

To teach the remount to rotate the croup round the forehand, usually called turning on the forehand, the trainer should first take the bridoon reins over, outside the bit reins. The right hand seizes the reins at the join across the palm, which also holds the whip. Standing opposite the horse, with the left hand passed behind the jaw, he draws the muzzle

of the horse to the left with the bridoon rein, and at the same time touches the horse behind the girth with the whip on the left side. This will make the horse advance the near hind, and the head being turned to the left the croup must move to the right. After one step, the horse must be made much of, and allowed to walk free for a few moments as a reward.

When the horse understands what is wanted, he will soon learn to move round in concentric circles, the forefeet making a small circle and the hind a large one.

At first the head must be forced round towards the whip hand, and the trainer produces what is called a lateral effect, the left rein and left side being used at the same time. Gradually this is changed to a direct effect, the trainer keeping the head straight and flexed by holding the near cheek of the bit with the left hand.

When rotations to both sides are obtained by direct effects, we come to diagonal effects. Diagonal effect, or left leg and right rein, and vice versa, must be mastered before a horse can perform the further balancing exercises correctly. To train the horse to move his quarters to the right when the head is turned to the right, the end of the bridoon rein is held in the left hand which also holds the near cheek of the bit. The right hand holding the whip also holds the off bit rein drawn tight across the neck in front of the wither. This rein draws the muzzle to the right, forming lateral flexion to the right, and the whip

against the left flank makes the croup rotate to the right, producing a correct diagonal effect.

When this is produced without effort to both sides, the same exercises must be taught mounted.

At first, rotation to the right can be obtained by drawing to the head into the left and applying the left leg, or by a lateral effect. Gradually, the same result is obtained with the head in correct direct flexion producing a direct effect, and finally the result towards which we have been working, namely, a diagonal effect, can be obtained by turning the muzzle to the right and applying the left leg.

The change from lateral to direct, and from direct to diagonal effect, must be so gradual as to be almost imperceptible.

When mounted, a complete lateral flexion is not required. A very slight bend towards the side to which we are going is sufficient.

When the remount understands rotating the croup with diagonal aids, he will soon learn to rotate the forehand round the haunches ; that is, turning on the haunches. At first a fairly large circle should be covered to prevent the horse moving the forehand, and keeping the croup stationary. To effect this, both legs keep the quarters moving, both hands carried to the right, move the forehand round to the right, and the right bridoon rein drawn to the right, assisted by the left leg, makes the horse rotate the forehand round the quarters. When active in this exercise, the size of the circle is decreased until the hind feet almost mark time during the turn.

This is the scientific way of teaching a polo pony to turn on his hocks. Most ponies fail to do this, and never reach a first-class standard in consequence.

The Passage

We can now prepare the horse for the "passage," sometimes called "side step" or "two-tracks." Few horses are taught to bend correctly in these exercises, almost invariably retaining the lateral effect throughout, and so lose all the value of this training. If, however, they are taught in the systematic way here recommended, until the diagonal movements become natural to them, they improve every time they are ridden in a school, instead of acquiring that wooden action which results from incorrect training. It is true that by means of lateral aids a horse can be forced to move to one side, but it must be remembered that no horse is in equilibrium unless working with diagonal aids and taught to look in the direction his feet are moving. Moreover, unless taught to obey diagonal aids, the horse will never be reliable at a gallop, and instead of wheeling to the right when required, may throw up his head to the left, and finding he is unable to wheel round will become out of hand.

On the other hand, the remount correctly taught by diagonal aids will improve every time he is ridden. His canter and gallop will always be true and the aids for turns or circles will always produce obedience. In addition to this, the suppling of the shoulders and loins will render the horse active, and

give him that endurance formerly considered indispensable to the cavalry horse. These suppling and balancing exercises will also accustom the horse to maintain himself poised in equilibrium for several minutes at a time. During this time, he has to carry himself and the rider, and learns that he need never expect the rider to carry his head for him.

When properly balanced and sensitive to the leg, the remount may be taught the true canter. To do this before is to run the risk of his acquiring a sprawling disunited pace instead of the smooth cadenced canter which is the foundation of the gallop.

The Canter

Of all the paces of a horse, the true canter is the most difficult to teach. It is remarkable how few horses are able to canter in a collected manner, with the head slightly turned towards the hand that leads instead of away from it. For example, if a horse leads with the off fore and off hind, he should have his head bent, slightly to the right, and if leading with the near fore the head should be inclined to the left. Provided, however, the elementary training of the remount has been carried out step by step, until he holds himself in equilibrium, is perfect in direct and lateral flexion, and obeys the leg, the canter comes naturally with very little teaching. Without this previous training the true canter is the most difficult pace to acquire. To study the action of the canter requires a trained eye, but in the saddle

it should be clear to the rider if the horse is cantering on the off or near fore, and if cantering true or disunited.

We all know that in cantering to the right the horse should lead with the off fore followed by the off hind, and must change to the near fore and near hind in moving to the left. We have therefore to teach the horse to strike off from a walk or trot into a true canter to the right and left, to change legs at the canter, and to check or increase the pace from 6 miles an hour to 30 miles an hour if necessary. One of the most common faults in the canter is for the horse to move sideways instead of the long axis of his body maintaining the line of direction. Unless care is exercised at first, this bad habit may be contracted and it will be most difficult to eradicate.

To teach a horse to strike off true with the off fore leading, both hands should be carried to the left to put the weight on the near fore ; and the off bit rein should be felt more strongly than the near to turn the head to the right ; both legs should press the horse forward and the stronger feeling with the left leg makes the horse advance the off hind leg and strike off true.

Reversing the aids on the left rein, the horse is taught to strike off true on the near fore and near hind.

When perfect in this exercise, he can be taught to change. At first he is pulled up to a walk before being changed, and allowed to walk three or four strides. This is afterwards reduced to two steps, one, and then with a halt the change of leg is effected.

Afterwards he can learn to change the legs in the air. This depends on the correct moment of changing the aids. For example, if cantering to the right, the reversed aids should be applied just as the off fore comes to the ground. At this moment the near fore and near hind are both raised and the pressure of the right leg will drive them forward in advance at the same time as the reins turn the horse's head in the new direction. With a little practice in applying the reversed aids at the right moment and with the exact amount of force necessary, a horse may be correctly changed from one rein to the other. This is a good suppling exercise and makes him clever and handy.

As soon as a horse is perfectly trained in the canter, can hold himself straight and in balance, and can be changed from one rein to the other, he may get long slow cantering work to improve his balance, to make him clever and collected, and to develop his muscles. There is nothing that makes a horse so perfect to ride as the long slow balanced canter, changing the rein every half mile. The wildest animal must come to hand during this long work, and the muscular development acquired is exactly what is required to accustom the horse to carry a crushing weight over long distances.

The Rein-Back

When a horse is well broken and well balanced, he can be made even lighter in hand by putting him more on his hocks in reining-back.

Although the "rein back" is a great help towards making a horse light in hand, I prefer to keep this part of the training to the last. If introduced earlier, it may be found that the horse prefers to rein back rather than bend to the bit. By doing so, they acquire the bad habit of getting behind the bit, and this will stand in the way of all subsequent training.

There are several ways of teaching a horse to rein back. A good horseman will always be able to effect this mounted. As an unsuccessful contest may have very serious results, it is better to teach the remount every new part of his training on foot.

If trained to be driven with long reins, it is simple to teach the remount to rein back, the pressure on the mouth being maintained until one step to the rear has been taken. Obedience should be at once rewarded by relieving the mouth of all pressure. Repeating this movement will shortly produce a quiet and well cadenced rein-back.

The disadvantage of teaching the rein-back with long reins lies in the failure to maintain the correct position of the head and neck. I prefer therefore to commence this lesson as follows: The trainer should stand in front of the horse, taking one snaffle rein in each hand close to the ring. By a backward and downward pressure he induces the horse to take one backward step. After a short interval this is repeated until the horse understands what is required of him. If he refuses to move, he should be drawn forward and the instant he raises a hind foot the pressure is placed on the mouth. Instead of carrying

the raised foot to the front it will be placed in rear of the other. Repeating this with the other leg, two strides to the rear will have been obtained.

Another plan which I have found infallible is to step on the horse's fore-feet while pushing him back. The horse raises the threatened foot and draws it out of danger, mechanically teaching himself to step back.

When the horse reins back freely, and maintains the correct placing of the head and neck, he can be mounted and the practice repeated.

The head being placed properly, it is allowed to bend down more than usual to the pressure of the bit. The left leg now applied to the side raises the near hind, at the same moment, if the right snaffle rein be drawn back, the horse will step backward instead of forward. Repeated with the left diagonal, right leg and left rein, another retrograde movement is produced. After he can step back three or four times like this, both legs and both reins will produce a similar result. A horse if properly trained to rein back will maintain the correct position of the forehand, and will step back freely without dragging the hind legs or swerving away from the line of direction.

Feeding the Remount

The art of training horses of every description lies in regulating the feeding and work in proportion to the constitution and strength. In other words, the horse must be maintained in perfect health of body

and limb in spite of the unnatural scale of feeding and work. In his natural state, a horse maintains himself in perfect health on nothing but grass, but would soon lose condition, the first visible sign of loss of health, if put into even mild training without the addition of muscle forming food. To severely work a young horse off grass, will as certainly break him down, as to suddenly fill him with corn will destroy his powers of digestion. It is necessary to understand this thoroughly in order to regulate the work and feeding according to the strength of every remount individually. With a batch of remounts in a cavalry squadron, it is no unusual thing to see them all fed alike and all worked alike. Without very competent trainers and remount-riders, it is difficult to arrange a separate scale of work and feeding for every young horse, and therefore more care must be taken not to hurry the weak and backward animals. To do so, would be to break them down constitutionally, or produce lameness in the feet and legs. With polo pony remounts it is easier to watch each case individually and to regulate the work and food.

In India, with few exceptions, remounts are totally untrained before being shipped. They have never been fed on corn, and have never been in muscle. The work and feeding of new remounts, therefore, must at first be of the mildest description, and the increase very gradual. Time is the remount's best friend, and the trainer's best assistant.

The first object of early training should not be a

rideable horse, but a healthy horse. Soft food, green grass, and lucerne, combined with walking exercise, are the means to this end. Overfeeding or overwork, until health and strength are established, will soon produce fever or liver troubles, and it may take months, and sometimes years, before a horse really recovers from them.

As soon as the remount is well covered, and carries a clean and healthy coat, the training may be increased. The duration and the nature of the work should be below the capabilities of the horse, never above. This will maintain the perfect state of health, and increase the muscle and heavy condition of the remount. During the first month or two it is preferable that nothing but slow work is given, and at the end of six months, remounts should have the appearance of prize cattle, but be able to trot four miles at the rate of eight miles per hour, without distress. By this time, they should be perfect in all the riding school exercises, quiet with stick and ball, and be a perfect hack at slow paces. During this training, it is well to protect the legs of every remount with numdah polo gaiters, secured with an elastic band four or five inches broad, to save the forelegs from the splints, brushing, and also from slight sprains which are inseparable from early training unless guarded against.

The secret of this training is never to ask a pony to perform more than he is able without distress, and to increase the demand gradually.

In conclusion, I must remind my readers that

though parts of the training would appear to be tedious in comparison with the result to be attained, it is false economy to disregard them. A well broken pony will always be charming to ride, and even if he goes back owing to bad riding, he can soon be made as good as ever by a short course of his original education. On the other hand, a pony imperfectly flexed, or with a hard mouth, will always be difficult even in the hands of a good horseman, and an impossible mount for a bad rider.

It is absurd to expect all the remounts which commence their training together to keep on a level with regard to their training. With varying temperaments among the horses, and different degrees of skill in the trainer, some horses will train in half the time necessary for others. The success of the remount training therefore must very greatly depend on the care exercised in keeping every horse at the same practice until fit to proceed to the next.

CHAPTER X

RE-BREAKING OLD POLO PONIES

ALTHOUGH the previous chapter was intended as a guide to training raw ponies, I recommend the same system for improving old ponies. Even so-called first-class tournament ponies are very greatly improved by a month's systematic course of this training. They become more collected, easier to play, and in every way better polo ponies. It is advisable, as recommended elsewhere, to rest tournament ponies for at least three months every year, and when "let down" their legs get a much needed rest and their mouths recover and become tender again. It is at the end of this period of rest that a month of re-breaking is most suitable. If "let down" during the rains they may be wanted for polo in October. If so, September might be devoted to the school. The work on foot is no tax on legs or constitution and is just what a pony requires before being regularly put into work.

I must, however, caution my readers that to obtain the best results the system must be carefully followed. It is almost useless to spend a week flexing a pony on foot, and before he understands

this phase to take him for a ride at a fast pace. In half-an-hour he will have forgotten all he was taught on foot.

As soon, however, as the pony bends nicely to the bit and releases the jaw to the pressure, he should be ridden in balance at a walk. Later on the balanced trot and canter will be acquired, and then he cannot have too much school work, slow at first and increasing to fast work as his mouth and condition allow.

I must again impress on my readers the necessity of polo-boots at all school work. It is just as necessary for old ponies as for remounts, and if this caution is disregarded a pony may be seriously damaged by striking a fore foot against the other fetlock, causing inflammation of the sesamoid bones. On the other hand, all forms of martingale should be discarded. A martingale is a great help to ride a pony imperfectly trained. No pony trained on my system should require a martingale. In fast polo it may again be required, but the less mechanical appliances are used during the training or re-breaking process the better.

Unless a pony has arrived at that state in life when he is only fit to act as a schoolmaster, on which beginners can learn polo, a certain amount of schooling is always beneficial. At the beginning of a season, and after ponies have been thrown out of work, schooling is almost a necessity, and is the best way to put them in wind and muscle without putting too much strain on their legs. When

ponies are polo-perfect, the school is also valuable to establish that mutual confidence between rider and pony which is the first essential to first-class polo. It must be remembered that every pony requires different work, and what is necessary for one may be injurious to another. For example, Arabs require very little work in the school. On the other hand, the more they get with stick and ball the better they play. Some country-bred ponies will not tolerate the polo ground on off days, and the sight of a stick, except in the game, seems to raise the spirit of opposition. Walers, especially, require a liberal amount of school work. In fact, the more they get the better polo ponies they become. Every stable, therefore, should have access to a riding school. The dimensions of a school depend on the ground available, but I have found the size and shape on accompanying diagram the best for all purposes. In India covered schools are not required. A wall 18 inches high is all that is necessary, provided the rounded ends are raised to 3 feet. Ponies soon learn that the wall is intended as an enclosure, and not as a fence to be jumped.

It is true ponies can be trained in smaller schools, but they cannot get the necessary fast work to put them in good kind.

Though I have never known a pony break down in a school, I do not think it wise to give any work of a severe nature until the pony has got some muscle on. As soon, however, as the pony is fit to work his schooling should begin.

When first the pony is mounted, the schooling must be given quietly at a walk, and during the few days the muscles are being trained to carry weight, the pony can be exercised in the rein-back, circle, and turns. This will take quite a week, and to bring a pony on quicker is to risk sore back or girth galls.

If the reader has any doubt on this point I would commend him to walk a hundred yards carrying two buckets of water. He will soon satisfy himself that muscles require practice to perform any work to which they have not recently been accustomed.

As soon as the pony is considered fit for cantering, he should be allowed to move at the slowest pace round a circle with the reins hanging loose. When accustomed to move with a "loose head," he may be allowed to move round the school, or, in the riding school parlance, to "go large," but should not get any severe changing work for some days.

At the end of the second week, a pony that has been carefully trained should be able to canter in circles, figures of 8, and to halt, rein-back and start at a canter.

The remaining fortnight should be in company with two or more ponies, and they can be taught to ride off, meet each other at all paces, gallop the whole length of the school together, and then halt, turn about and start at a gallop, according to the word of command of the leader. If ponies begin to work together as soon as they enter the school,

it sometimes unsteadies them. I much prefer to see the first few minutes devoted to the rein-back, circle, and figure of 8 before the combined work is commenced. It is a mistake to remain at one exercise too long, and when tired of the galloping, ponies should break up and play at "touch last" or "follow the leader," both being exercises requiring quick and handy ponies.

When ponies are school-perfect, the same exercises should be performed in the open, and if ponies are not more excitable there than in the confines of the school, the pony may safely be considered a thoroughly schooled pony.

It will be seen that this training to be effective should be spread over two months, but I do not mean that every pony will want so long a time, nor do I suppose my readers are likely to forego polo all this time. On the other hand, I do recommend that ponies required for fast polo on November 1st should be "taken up" early in September, worked on foot or at a walk till October and schooled all October in addition to polo. Ponies let down after the previous season in March or April, unless they had good mouths, should be taken up earlier and brought on more like untrained animals on the lines I have set forth. During the season it is almost impossible to improve a mouth, but after a rest and with careful training, wonderful changes can be effected. The training of polo ponies is an art learnt by patience and experience, and once mastered, it enables a polo player to enjoy his polo

at half the cost necessary to provide himself with made ponies.

Towards the end of this training for polo, ponies must be taught to jump into a gallop, to halt and rein back, and to stop, turn on the hocks and again jump into their stride.

Figures D and E give illustrations of these exercises which are the most severe on a pony, the most difficult to learn and the most difficult to teach. With a balanced pony it is much simplified.

To teach a pony to stop and turn on his hocks, the forehand must be raised and the hindquarters drawn well under the centre of gravity. The hands, therefore, should be raised to lighten the forehand, and strong pressure of both legs is required to make the hocks come well forward. If a pony puts his head down when he stops, the weight is forward and he stops on his forehand. This is very severe on his legs and he cannot spring off again when wanted to do so.

To teach a pony to turn about when suddenly halted is not difficult provided the halt is well made. The pony and rider is then poised in equilibrium and may be easily turned about as follows. To turn right about, the left reins should be pressed against the left side of the neck, the left hand slightly raised. The right hand should be drawn back and slightly away from the side to bend the head to the right. At the same time the left leg must exert a strong pressure behind the girth. With any but well-trained ponies, for which calf pressure is

sufficient, a good thump with the lower part of the leg or heel is usually necessary.

As soon as ponies are fit to gallop in company without getting excited, three or four should be worked in school together, by word of command, cantering, turning, halting, reining back all together in line on the word of command. Afterwards this is increased to galloping, and even racing, riding off, and bumping are all necessary. Such exercises strengthen tendons and ligaments and put ponies and players in excellent wind and muscle.

What the drill ground is for the recruit and the rifle-range for markmanship, the riding-school is for polo ponies.

SECOND PART

TOURNAMENT POLO

CHAPTER XI

HORSEMANSHIP

THE majority of polo players are, or hope to be, competitors in tournaments, and though the ambition to become first-class is seldom lacking, we find so few who are first-class players. In India there are two reasons for this. A proportion of the polo players cannot afford to mount themselves for good tournaments; but the main cause lies in the fact that so few players are really first-class horsemen. I know there is an idea prevalent that a good man at polo need not be a brilliant horseman, but I am absolutely certain that this is a fallacy. In all my experience I have never known a first-class player who was not a fine horseman; whereas I have seen so many unable to cross the boundary line of second-class, solely for want of the art of horsemanship.

To make my meaning clear, I wish to distinguish between riding and horsemanship. The former term is so often confounded with the latter that few people are aware of any difference. Riding

may be acquired by all without trouble, whereas expert horsemanship can only be learnt after much physical energy and by carefully following the instructions of an expert who is fully competent to teach. In short, there is as much difference as between the passengers and the driver of a motor-car.

Let us now consider what horsemanship means. In a few words, it means establishing a complete understanding between the horse and its rider, compelling the former to surrender its will entirely to that of the man. This discipline on the part of the horse is only possible when the rider instinctively uses the same signals, instead of words of command, on every occasion. To employ the wrong signal, or a doubtful one, and to expect obedience is as hopeless as to expect an order to be obeyed when conveyed in equivocal language, or with mistakes in the text.

The first point we have to consider is the best code of signals to be established between man and horse. Secondly, we have to teach ourselves the signals so thoroughly that we instinctively employ the correct ones without having to think; and, lastly, we have to train horses to know what our signals mean and so discipline them that they obey them implicitly.

The code of signals which has been found effective for many hundreds of years is a combination of the pressure of the bit in the mouth, the pressure of one or both legs to the sides, an alteration in the

position of the centre of gravity, and the human voice. With such a complicated code it is not surprising that so few men become horsemen and so few horses are really properly broken.

Having examined the foundation of equitation, let us apply it. When a young horse is bitted for the first time, it finds that the pressure of the bit hurts the bars of the mouth, and to avoid pain it bends the neck. When first ridden, it flinches from anything touching its flank, and the spasm caused by the flinch draws the other hind leg forward to maintain the equilibrium. If the weight of the rider be shifted by his leaning to one side, the horse will instinctively endeavour to regain its equilibrium by inclining to that side. Even a bicycle will do as much. Finally, from contact with man the horse soon learns to understand in a general way the meaning of the various intonations of the voice. This fact is evident from seeing an accomplished colt-breaker schooling a young horse across country, or a squadron of half-broken horses tearing madly away when excited by the shouts of their riders practising the charge.

From the above it is evident that the means of communicating our wishes to the horse is principally through the reins of the bit, assisted by the legs, equilibrium, and voice. What I want to make quite clear to every rider is, that as long as he depends on the reins to keep himself steady in the saddle he cannot use them to indicate his wishes to the horse.

The first step, therefore, towards expert horsemanship is a seat independent of any assistance from the reins. To acquire this seat we must first place the muscles of the thigh so that they all bear on the saddle, and then by practice we must strengthen them so as to bear the weight of the body in spite of the movement of the horse. As soon as a man is a fair rider therefore, and has confidence in himself that he will not fall off, he should ride on a numnah or folded blanket, with the thighs well opened up and the knees as far back as is compatible with his sitting on the seat and not on the fork. This, even at a walk, will at first be a strain on the thigh muscles, and it is this strain that will strengthen them. At first the rider should only walk so as to acquire the horseman's seat, but after three or four days he should become perfectly at ease and be able to go through all the riding-school evolutions as well as with saddle and stirrups. I must, however, caution all riders to pull up if they find the strain is so severe as to endanger the tailor's muscle, as is not unlikely with men past their first youth.

When riders have learnt to ride at all paces on the numnah with slack reins, and can mount and dismount from the halt and on the move with the assistance of the mane and surcingle they have crossed the most difficult obstacle they have to overcome. Until, however, this proficiency has been acquired it is next to useless to proceed with the further instruction in scientific riding, as the

rider will be so continually steadying himself by means of the reins that his horse must deteriorate in his hands. In short, expert riding depends chiefly on the way the reins are used, commonly called hands, and good hands depend chiefly on a firm seat. A firm seat can be acquired by constant practice and by strengthening the thighs until they can support the body upright without the assistance of the reins.

I do not expect that polo players will all find it necessary to go back to the riding-school, but if they have the ambition to improve, riding without stirrups is the only sure way to do so. I would remind them that riding on a numnah or folded blanket is much easier than on a saddle without stirrups, and I recommend them at first to ride a trained polo pony in this way in the school for a few days, until they have acquired confidence. When first mounted, the thighs should be opened as wide as possible with the legs hanging down as straight as is compatible with balance. Then, by raising the toes, it will be found that the riding muscle running up beneath the thighs obtains a grip on the horse's back. It is the use of this muscle instead of the calf of the leg that constitutes the main difference between a fine horseman and only a good rider. Men unaccustomed to riding have this muscle placed under the seat, that is, on the saddle instead of outside and gripping the saddle. In other words, they have round thighs. Riding without stirrups is the only way to bring

the riding muscle to its proper place, giving the rider flat thighs, or the horseman's seat.

We have seen that horses are guided by a code of signals, and to obtain good results we must first learn the signals ourselves so thoroughly that they can be used correctly without having to think. Secondly, we must train our horses to understand what the signals indicate and to obey them implicitly. I propose now to consider the universal horse code.

The reins being the conductors between the man's brain and the horse's brain through the sensitive bars of the mouth, they should be handled with the greatest delicacy. To acquire the habit of doing so the man must always ride with a loose arm and shoulder, not with rounded wrists, as is so often taught, but with muscles so relaxed that the weight in pounds on the horse's mouth is reduced to a minimum. Whenever the weight exceeds five pounds the horse should learn to stop, and if the pressure be repeated, it should mean that the horse is required to rein back.

The reins pressed against the side of the neck should convey to the horse that the rider wants him to circle or turn to the opposite side. The third and last rein signal, and the one most difficult to learn, as well as to teach, is to collect the horse. This signal is a continual pressure of the reins, but so light that the horse must know that it does not mean that he has to halt or rein back, but just sufficient to make him bend his neck at the poll

and to get his hocks more under the centre of gravity.

If these, and only these, rein signals be employed, a horse will not be likely to forget them once learnt, nor will he think it necessary to run away whenever the pressure on the mouth becomes unbearable. Horses taught on this principle, as they are by fine horsemen, will always move at a steady pace when the reins are loose, and any weight on the mouth will immediately bring them to a halt.

The leg signals, which are always used in conjunction with the reins, are usually called aids, assisting as they do to make the horse obey the reins. The signals are also three, the pressure of the left leg against the barrel of the horse, the pressure of the right leg, and the pressure of both legs. These signals may not be easy to learn, but are simple to teach a horse, as they act automatically. The pressure of leg, spur or whip on the muscle on the back-ribs causes a horse to flinch, not unlike the spasm felt by a man when poked in the ribs, and this spasm causes the horse to advance the opposite hind leg, which is the first motion a horse uses to turn or circle to the opposite direction. To turn or circle to the right therefore, the drawn back left leg must be applied to the left side, and at the same time the left hand holding the reins must be carried to the right so as to press the left reins against the left side of the neck. In all military riding-schools men are taught to shorten the right rein at the same time as they carry the

hand to the right, and no doubt with young horses it assists them to obey.

If horses are required to be taught to obey one hand, as is necessary with troop horses and polo ponies, it is better to train them to obey only the simplest signals; and as even the best horsemen cannot always manage to shorten the inner reins, it is preferable to train ponies and riders to rely only on the pressure of the left rein and left leg to turn a horse to the right and the reverse aids to turn or circle to the left.

The last leg signal is the pressure of both legs to the sides. This automatically makes the horse bring his hocks more under the body, and is therefore used to make a horse move, increase his pace, or gather himself together for a leap. It is also used to assist a horse to halt by means of his hind legs and not on his forelegs,—a most important point for polo ponies.

The position of the centre of gravity of a rider is a few inches behind that of the horse. It is evident, therefore, that in order to assist the horse to move rapidly, the rider should lean forward so as to throw the centre of gravity of the whole forward. The horse does this naturally by extending its head, just as a runner does it by leaning forward.

A cyclist gets the utmost pace out of his machine by leaning as far forward as possible: he leans to the right to turn or circle to the right, and the reverse way to go to the left. On horseback we

can assist our mounts every bit as much as the man on his cycle. When a horse is going fast, therefore, and we want to stop him, we must lean back, but never forward. This looks so simple on paper, but no one but a good rider can resist the inclination to shorten the reins to stop a horse, which, of course, pulls the rider over the front of the saddle and the centre of gravity forward.

In other words, a bad rider who does not sit back to stop a horse is in reality signalling to him to go faster, and all the time he is cursing him for a runaway brute.

Finally, the human voice is by no means the least important means of indicating the intentions of the rider to the horse. A soothing tone will quiet an excitable animal, and a rough remark will enforce obedience when neither whip nor spur would have been effective. This power of the voice was very noticeable in former days, when riding-schools were used more for drill purposes, and the horses knew the words of command every bit as well as the men, and paid far more attention to the instructor.

Having given in theory the art of acquiring horsemanship, I want to explain how this can be learnt in practice with the least trouble and in the shortest time. To begin with, a well trained pony with a perfect mouth, is best. A few days in the school with a folded blanket kept on by a surcingle is certainly advisable. After this, half an hour a day trotting and cantering work in a saddle without

stirrups for about a month will do wonders. If steadfastly persevered with, the rider will find he can then canter round with folded arms, and circle about just by the slightest pressure of the rein against the neck and the feeling of the leg against the pony's side. As soon as he feels he can do so without hanging on by the mouth he should practise with stick and ball without stirrups. At first he will find this a most difficult performance, and the strain on the thighs will be severe: but he must remember it is this strain that is making him into an expert horseman.

CHAPTER XII

FINISHING PONIES

THE polo player who can afford to buy the best-trained ponies in the market is not likely to spend the time and take the trouble necessary to train his own. At the same time, he will be the better player if he knows something of the art of finishing ponies. This is an art in itself, and for every dozen men who can train a young pony there is not more than one who knows how to finish. Training lies more in giving a young pony a good mouth and manners and making him into a good polo pony. Finishing begins when a pony is so-called trained, and lies in correcting faults, improving every faculty, and making a good into a brilliant polo pony. The player who has acquired this art will find he can play on ponies rejected by others as impossible, and so can buy first-class animals, as regards shape and quality, for second-class prices. Mistakes will, of course, be made, but as the cost of such ponies should not exceed 50 per cent. of their value when first-class, it is evident that polo will not be an expensive game to those players who are skilled in the art of finishing.

when a horse's jawbone is splintered by the use of too severe a bit, it is very difficult to distinguish the difference between such cases.

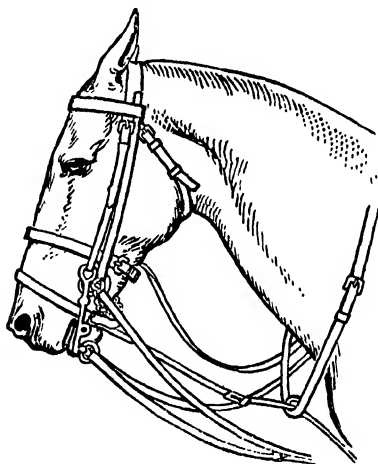
If a horse is affected in the brain it is useless to waste time in trying to train him, but even these may be trained to harness, and often work between the shafts in an exemplary manner.

Horses that bore against the bit do so as a rule to avoid pain, until it becomes a habit. It is a most objectionable habit, and if confirmed, is most difficult to cure. A gag-snaffle and a rubber bit is the best means to employ. With this bit the horse feels the minimum of pain, and after a time he may give up the habit.

A stargazer is more difficult to cure, as the habit comes from defective conformation aggravated by improper breaking. Much can also be effected by mild biting and careful riding, but it will usually be necessary to resort to mechanical appliances. The head can be kept down by means of the standing martingale, the buckles being attached to the noseband or to the rings of the snaffle. In the latter case the greatest care must be taken in adjusting the length of the martingale. If too short, it is very liable to damage the horse's mouth, and if too long, it is no use. I prefer to see these martingales attached to a rubber bit, as this never cuts a horse's mouth. When attached to the noseband, the martingale can be much tighter, as the pressure comes on the frontal bone, which is not affected by it. There is a danger of the lip being pinched

between the snaffle and the lower edge of the noseband. If properly adjusted an inch below the cheek bones, however, this cannot occur. Some horses pulling against a short standing martingale will always gall the skin between the forelegs. The only remedy for this is to use a martingale of soft pagri * cloth, which never galls.

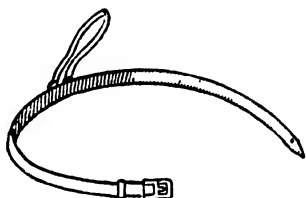
A recent invention to keep a pony's head in the proper place is more effective than any described



above, but should not be resorted to until the other means have failed. This is called the "dropped noseband," and consists of a second noseband which buckles on the usual noseband and encircles the nose above the bit, being buckled under the chin. The part that goes over the nose is lined with steel

* Native turban.

to prevent the nostrils being closed by the pressure of the noseband. The standing martingale may be attached to this noseband instead of to the ordinary noseband, and as the pressure comes on the nasal bone instead of the frontal bone, the effect is far more severe.



Many ponies will play in this appliance which could not be ridden in any other way.

One of the most unpleasant vices is rearing ; but it is not a difficult one to cure. Horses first learn to rear in order to avoid the pain of the bit. Later on they find it an infallible means of getting the rider off and avoiding work, and the result is a confirmed rearer. If the horse is in the first stage, and only rears to avoid pain, he should be tied to an old horse, and the latter led for a few days by a man on a third horse. The young horse can then be mounted, the reins at first being attached to the head collar and not to the bit. In this way the colt will gradually get accustomed to the feel of the bit and will learn that rearing is impossible unless he is strong enough to pull over the break-horse with him. If a horse rears in order to get the rider off, or in order to avoid going a road he does not approve of, he can only be cured by judicious punishment. To effect this, the rider must be a strong horseman, and should assist himself by riding in a buckjumping saddle. If not available, a greatcoat or roll of matting can be

strapped over the pommel well down over the knees. As soon as the horse intends to get up, his head should be pulled round to one side, forcing him to walk round in a small circle until he is giddy. Then he should be driven in the required direction with the assistance of voice and whip. After a few victories—and remember that it must be a victory every time—the horse will realize that rearing means punishment and is not to be attempted lightly. I have seen many rearers cured like this, and I have never found a horse to resist the method.

To cure a buckjumper is not so easy, because the rider must first be capable of sitting a horse however bad he may be. At the same time there are many horses commonly called buckjumpers which are easily cured. Most horses broken late in life are liable to throw a buck when fresh or when frightened. To break these, the horse should be led into a closed place from where he cannot escape, and should be saddled with a foreleg strapped up. The knee-strap having been removed, he should be lunged for a few minutes. If he means to buck, he will do so when the saddle is put on. Before the rider mounts, the leg should again be strapped up. No horse will buck on three legs, and it is usually the moment of mounting that is the dangerous time. As soon as the strap is removed by the assistant, he should turn the horse round a few times before leading him forward. If the first few lessons are successful, the horse will probably be cured in a fortnight, but in bad cases even then

precautions must not be relaxed. To sit on a horse and let him buck may be a very amusing performance for a man to show off his horsemanship, but it is not the way to improve a horse.

As soon as a pony is amenable and can be ridden without fear of his playing up or pulling madly, he should be put through a thorough schooling, as explained in Chapter IX. If in good hard condition, an hour's fast work in the school will not usually be too much. After a month of this he should be school-perfect and be able to go through the most difficult evolutions of twisting and turning with a slack rein. Then, but not till then, is the pony fit for work outside. Moreover, it may be found that as soon as he gets on a level piece of ground he will again begin to pull. Time and patience will effect a cure in most cases, and if the memory of a polo ground induces the habit of pulling, the pony must be worked elsewhere until he forgets that he should take hold in the open.

A ploughed field is a good substitute for the school when first the pony is taken in the open, and when perfect there, it can be gradually changed for an open maidan, until the pony is thoroughly convinced that on no occasion is he required to go fast until the bridle is released.

While advising good horsemen to train their own animals, and to finish half-trained ponies, I must caution them against attempting to do so unless they have the patience to persevere until the

education is completed. To race or even hunt a pony during the process of training is fatal, and may throw him back six months or more. It must also be remembered that no man can train more than three ponies at a time, and this number only if he has his mornings and evenings free. To a man who has a profession one pony to break is an amusement, two becomes a business, and more than two a positive labour.

CHAPTER XIII

BITTING

AMONG the many subjects a polo player should have a thorough knowledge of, that of biting must take a prominent place. Were all ponies perfectly broken this would not be necessary, but in India few animals, that can be bought, reach this high standard. I consider that a good knowledge of the proper use of bits is so important that at the risk of repeating myself I propose to devote a whole chapter to this subject. Though I write especially for polo players, my remarks apply equally to troop horses and hunters. The latter do not require to be so thoroughly in hand as a polo pony, and the troop horse gets, or should get, so careful a preparation before being put into the ranks, that the majority work in the same pattern bit. At the same time the better bred horses would make more satisfactory troop horses if more intelligence were brought to bear on the way they are fitted with bits instead of working them in the old pattern heavy bits that are served out to hold heavy cart horses.

Chapter XI explained that the bit was the

means of conveying the wishes of the rider to his horse, and therefore should not be used solely in order to stop the horse by main force, as is too often the case. The question now arises as to the best bit to employ for this purpose.

If a horse is being bitted for the first time the best bit to employ is undoubtedly a smooth, plain snaffle of steel or India rubber, according to the disposition of the colt. At first the rubber bit should be tried, but if it is found that this is too mild and the colt begins to lean against it instead of bending to it, I recommend that it be replaced by a steel snaffle.

Before a colt is mounted it should be bitted and have the dumb jockey on in the stable for half an hour twice a day, increasing the time to an hour after about a fortnight, to accustom him to the bit and induce him to bend the neck to avoid the pressure.

When first mounted, a colt is inclined to throw about his head to avoid pain; the rider, therefore, must be most careful to ride with a loose arm, and should never assist himself by means of the many mechanical appliances, which I propose to deal with later, and which are so useful to reform a mouth already spoilt by bad riding. If, however, owing to defective conformation, a colt cannot be controlled without, it may be necessary to use a standing martingale fixed to the rings of the snaffle, but sufficiently long to enable the colt to have a free head except when he stargazes.

Work on the snaffle should be continued daily in

two short lessons of half an hour each until the colt will always move with a loose rein at a walk, trot, and canter, and will circle gently to either hand, stopping at the slightest weight on the mouth, and reining back when this pressure is repeated. With a tractable colt this should not take more than a month.

When thoroughly mouthed to the snaffle, a double bridle can be used, but this should also first be put on in the stable to accustom the horse to the feel of it, and when ridden, it must be used with great care, first riding the horse entirely on the bridoon and gradually putting more weight on the bit reins. The best bit for this is undoubtedly a short checked Ward-Union, or a Banbury bit, with a straight bar or very mild port. The training to a bit will certainly take a fortnight or longer before the horse can be taken out of a canter, but as soon as the horse can be controlled without having any inclination to break away, the pace may be gradually increased, provided this does not entail more weight on the reins. The majority of horses are spoilt at this stage because the rider steadies himself by the reins when going fast, and the colt learns to take hold when galloping. The result is, he associates the pain with a desire on the part of the rider for him to go fast.

It will be found that a number of colts resist the bit by boring. These should be ridden in a gag-snaffle in addition to a plain snaffle, and the weight on each so distributed that the horse's head

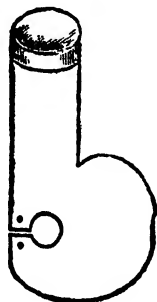
is kept in the proper position. It seems to be the prevailing idea that a gag-snaffle is a severe bit, or even a cruel one. This is not the case. The action of the gag is to bring the pressure up into the corners of the mouth instead of on to the bars, and though it produces some discomfort, making the horse raise his head, it gives no pain such as a horse feels from a snaffle and standing martingale, or a double bridle.

In spite of all possible care in breaking, some colts will always pull, and the cause is not easy to detect. It may be due to a sore mouth, in which case the horse must be thrown up until the sore is quite healed and the training recommenced from the beginning; or it may be the result of high breeding, and hereditary. There is nothing transmitted more surely than temperament, and the progeny of pulling and untractable horses will be most difficult to train. It must not be thought, however, that such horses are hopeless. Time and patience will effect marvellous changes; but remember that with such cases, to hurry the training is fatal.

I now want to consider the biting of horses whose mouths have already been spoilt by bad riding or by the improper use of mechanical appliances. The art in this lies in a correct decision as to the cause of the horse pulling. The cause will be one of three things, or the combination of two or more.

The usual cause is bad breaking and riding, and the cure lies in first resting the mouth for at least

a fortnight, and then breaking all over again as if the horse were a newly-bitted colt. The next cause, quite as common as the first, and usually found inseparable from it, is ignorance of biting or the use of a bit which gives the acutest pain. The cure for this is to learn all about bits and to suit the bit to the horse. Lastly, a large proportion of horses pull owing to their conformation and temperament. Most of these can be cured by time and training, and by the use of certain mechanical appliances, which will be discussed later. When the rider is satisfied that the horse has really a sensitive mouth, and only requires proper biting, the question arises as to the best bit to use. I am convinced that the best results are usually obtained from the rubber bit. I recommend that the bit, a Liverpool with a rubber mouthpiece, be covered with leather, the seam being on the upper surface of the bar. Even this caution is necessary, for saddlers are seldom horsemen, and do not always consider the feelings of the horse. Another caution is also necessary. A single bit, if used without lip-guards, is bound to cause the greatest pain, the corners of the mouth being held as in a vice between the bar of the bit and the curb chain. The lip-guard usually employed is a circular piece of leather, which answers the purpose if broad enough, but I prefer the shape as shown in sketch.



The trainer must be careful to distinguish between a sensitive mouth, which requires delicate handling, and a mouth rendered unnaturally sensitive by having a splintered jaw. This horrible cruelty, the result of using too severe a bit, is not so unusual as would be supposed and, if undetected, is likely to ruin a horse for life. The only cure is a surgical operation to remove all the bone splinters, followed by complete rest for two months to allow the jaw to set, after which the horse should be rebroken and treated like a colt.

For a sensitive mouth, there is no bit so suitable as the gag in conjunction with a rubber bit. The rubber is the mildest form of bit, and the action of the gag is against the corners of the mouth and does not hurt the sensitive bars.

There are some horses which, from being ridden by heavy-handed riders, have such callous mouths that nothing but a severe bit has any effect on them. Such horses must be heavily bitted, but should be ridden with a light hand. The longer the lower arm and the shorter the upper arm of the bit the more severe it is, owing to the leverage produced. Greater severity is also obtained by using a bit with a high port. With a straight bar the pressure of the bit is taken by the tongue, which acts as a cushion to protect the bars of the mouth. A port is intended to allow the tongue to fit into the hollow of the bit and so bring more pressure on to the bars. A high port relieves the tongue from all pressure and transfers the whole

of it to the sensitive bars. For this reason, when selecting a mild bit, a straight bar mouthpiece should be chosen, with as short a cheek as possible. It will be found that many horses, and especially highly bred ones, prefer a sliding bar to a fixed one. The reason of this is due to the give of the sliding bar breaking the jar of the pull on the reins, and these bits are, therefore, most suitable for polo.

It must be remembered that the action of the bit exerts pressure on the poll as well as on the mouth, tending to lower the head, and whatever force there may be on the top of the head reduces the pressure on the mouth. To make this more severe, bits have been invented, like the Chifney and the Sikunder, which in very good hands are most effective breaking bits, but which should never be used by any except riders quite independent of the assistance of the reins, nor even by them except for training purposes, and never for polo. To conclude, always use the mildest possible bit, and if not successful, first try and cure a puller by time and more training, keeping severe bits as a last resource.

If a horse's mouth bleeds, at once discover the cause. If its teeth are too sharp, which is no unusual thing about seven years of age, get them filed; if the bars are cut, lay the horse up until quite healed and use a rubber bit; if the lip is pinched, put on the lip guard which should have been there from the first, and if cut on the outside

of the mouth, raise the nose band to its proper place just below the cheek bone, where the action of the snaffle cannot chafe the lip against it.

Before leaving the subject of biting, I must mention how to deal with horses which carry the tongue over the bit. Various inventions have been tried for this, such as the gridiron bit or snaffle, but nothing has any effect on a hot horse that has once acquired this habit. The only cure is to tie the tongue down with a piece of tape about 15 inches long. After a few months, most horses will get accustomed to the bit on the tongue and the tape will be no longer necessary, but there are some well bred horses that can never dispense with this appliance. They are so excitable that they draw the tongue right back whenever they feel the bit, and unless the tongue is kept in its place by mechanical means, the bit comes straight on to the bars of the mouth, with the usual result that the mouth is cut the first time the horse pulls.

To assist the rider and to counteract faulty conformation, the following appliances are most useful.

The nose band if moderately tight prevents a horse keeping his mouth wide open, and the pressure on the nose often has a very marked result.

The standing martingale attached to this nose-band assists in keeping the head in the proper position. With some horses, and especially Arabs, the standing martingale is more effective when attached to the rings of the snaffle. In the latter case, the martingale should be longer than in the

former, as the pressure acts directly on the bars of the mouth, and they must be carefully watched to see that they do not get cut.

Whenever the standing martingale is attached to the nose band, care must be taken that the latter is in its proper place close under the cheek bone. If too low, the bit will force the lips against the nose band and the pain will madden the horse, making him pull worse than ever.

Running reins are sometimes useful for breaking purposes, but I do not recommend them for general use. When used, the buckle should be attached to the D's of the pommel. The ends are then taken through the rings of the bit and back through the rings of a very short running martingale to the hand, where they are joined by means of a double buckle.

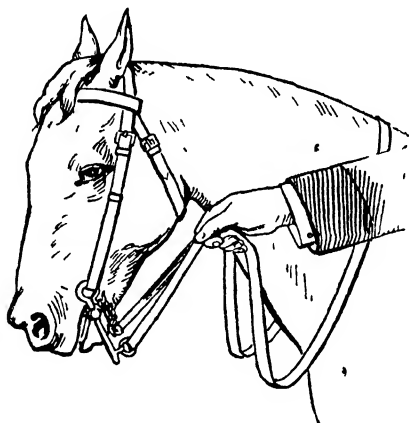
The running martingale is, in my opinion, a very useful appliance. It is condemned by Captain Horace Hayes and other writers as contrary to certain principles, and therefore unsound. The fact remains, however, that most jockeys use it, and that a large proportion of polo ponies go better in this than in anything else. If used long, as for racing, the rings should reach up to the neck just in front of the wither. It then acts much as if the rider always kept his hands in the proper position, well down on each side of the withers. At polo, many ponies work best with a very short running martingale. The reason I am unable to explain, but from experience I have found that

this short martingale is a most valuable aid to acquiring complete mastery over a large proportion of animals.

Though every polo pony has a favourite bit in which he plays best, I recommend that young horses be trained on the mildest bits, rubber for choice ; that when severe bits are necessary to re-break a horse it should be exchanged for a milder bit as soon as possible ; that when horses pull the cause should first be discovered, and the bit not changed for a more severe one until other things have failed ; and lastly, certain bits, though allowable for breaking purposes, should never be used for purposes, such as polo, where the horse gets unavoidably more punishment than he deserves or understands. Among these I include the Hanoverian Pelham, the Chifney, the Mohawk, and the Sikunder. On the other hand, I recommend the Ward-Union bit with a sliding bar, or the Banbury, with a large smooth bridoon or a gag snaffle, as the best bridle for general use. If this will not hold them, try to discover the cause rather than risk spoiling their mouths by using a more severe bit.

It has been said, with regard to polo ponies, that there is a key to every mouth, and no doubt this is correct. Having found the key, however, we must know how to use it. In India, where the best syces are not as intelligent as we would wish, and are absolutely ignorant about biting, the polo player should invariably examine the bit before mounting, and adjust the curb chain or cheek

piece if not exactly right. With blood stock this is the more necessary, as highly bred ponies will not tolerate the same amount of pain as a half bred, and may become unmanageable simply owing to the bit being badly adjusted or from the curb chain being too tight. On one occasion, when playing a pony such as I describe, I found I could do nothing with her, but after letting out the curb chain a couple of holes, she was as perfect as ever. Her



CURB CHAIN CORRECT LENGTH (SEVERE).

syce, anxious that his pony should surpass herself, had put the curb chain two holes tighter for the match, because it was usual for me to tighten the chain of another pony less highly bred when playing in tournaments.

I now propose to describe how the bit should be adjusted. It is perfectly useless to test the tightness

of the curb chain by placing one or more fingers between it and the jaw, as is usually directed in books.

The correct way is to hold the bit reins and draw them back to see what angle is made by the cheek of the bit and the head piece. This angle when 135° , as illustrated above, is the position of the bit when most severe. When 45° it is most mild and 90° is about correct. To have the bit at a bigger angle than 135° is to irritate the horse to such an extent that he will probably be found unmanageable, and yet I seldom go on to a polo ground without seeing some unfortunate ponies with the bits curbed up tight like this, or being ridden in a single bit without a lip guard, proving how necessary it is that polo players should be instructed in the art of biting.

Sometimes the proper adjustment of the curb chain is not possible on account of its being too short. It will then be found that although the hooks are in the same links as usual, the head piece is tighter, and the bit being higher up in the mouth, the chain



is also tighter. By loosening the head piece a hole on each side, the bit will be adjusted to its

proper place, and the chain becoming slack, will give the bit the proper play.

It will often be found that the curb chain galls

the skin behind the chin, and even affects the bone of the jaw. This is prevented by a chain guard. I have tried all kinds, leather, rubber and cloth, but the only satisfactory guard, and the one I have used for all my ponies since I first discovered it, is a guard made of Numnah sewn up like a cylinder through which the chain passes.

The ordinary spring curb hooks cannot be improved upon. A few years ago a patent curb hook was invented which at first seemed to be an improvement. It did not, however, stand the test of time, and any undue strain put it out of order.

The question of playing with a double bridle or a single rein is one that is constantly being asked. A few years ago, when the Jodhpur Polo Team was at the top, every one used to copy those brilliant horsemen by playing in a single rein and very tight standing martingales.

At the present time, I see the majority playing in double bridles. For my own part I much prefer a pony that plays best in a single rein, and if a man is good enough horseman, I am certain he ought to train all his ponies like this. Any one but a fine horseman will do better to play in a double bridle, for then the bridoon takes part of the unnecessary weight and saves the mouth. Highly-bred ponies, if broken to a double bridle, do not care for the single bit; but the same ponies, if trained by a horseman such as we see among the Rajputs, would be even more perfect in a single rein, provided they were played by equally good

riders. Much depends on the training and the riding, but even this is not enough unless the polo player understands the art of biting, and personally attends to the adjustment of each bit before he mounts to ride on to the ground.

CHAPTER XIV

CONFORMATION OF POLO PONIES

THOUGH the principles of the correct shape of horses should be studied in theory, it is only by examining the animals that have proved their worth that a man can become a good judge of a horse. Many men acquire this reputation without being entitled to it, and it is no unusual thing to see men acting as judges in Horse Shows more on account of their love of horses and their social status, than because they have studied the horse. I always find the best test of a good judge of horse-flesh is the quality of a man's stable. It is true some of the best judges may be poor men, but even then it will be found that every animal in their stables will have a character of his own, and all of them will have been well selected.

At the present time cavalry and artillery officers of the British Service do not purchase their own remounts as they did twenty years ago, and in consequence they do not have as much experience in choosing horses as those of the Indian cavalry. As a result, the latter officers are, as a class, far better judges of troop horses than the former. To

a great extent this is the reason Indian Silladar Cavalry Regiments can mount themselves at an average of Rs. 375 a horse, whereas every animal drafted into the British cavalry or artillery costs the Indian Government between Rs. 1050 and Rs. 1100. When we realize that the only reason the Indian Government continues to pay twice as much as it needs for remounts, is that it does not trust its mounted officers to be good judges of horses, it is evident that the art of selecting horses is one that should form part of the education of every cavalry officer. I do not think it is any exaggeration to say that the polo player who understands the points of a horse can obtain good polo ponies for half the price paid by those who buy on performances, provided, of course, he is prepared to train them and finish them himself.

To enter into every detail of this subject would take up too much space in this book, so I must refer my readers to that excellent work, Fitzwygram's "Horses and Stables," in which the chapters on conformation are most clear.

In selecting horses, the first consideration is the purpose for which the horse or pony is required. To reject a polo pony because it does not look as if it would win races is as foolish as to purchase a thorough-bred to perform farm work. It is well, therefore, to divide horses into classes. For racing purposes only thorough-bred stock is of any value, and for first-class races, even this is not enough unless horses are related closely to those

noble families which for generations have proved their worth. With such, a deep knowledge of conformation may not be so necessary as their breeding alone is usually a proof of their shape for galloping, and the eye of the student may detect apparent faults which really do not exist. To the uninitiated, a race horse in training may appear light of bone and wanting in power, but the same horse when let down or at stud may be the perfection of symmetry.

The class we have chiefly to deal with for polo ponies or troop horses is usually called the Hunter class, and the best type is termed the thorough-bred hunter. Very few of this type are really thorough-bred, but the term is used by dealers to denote a better bred animal than the majority of good hunters, and though not in the stud-book, the horse is probably seven-eighth T. B. In Ireland, they talk of a Blood Horse with a stain, which aptly describes an animal seven-eighth or fifteen-sixteenth thorough-bred. For polo, this is the best class, and though such ponies could not win good races, they are better polo ponies than the T. B., with a few exceptions. In India, where the work is all on the top of the ground, weight in a polo pony is not so necessary, and some of the best ponies would be looked upon as weedy in England, where very powerful hocks and quarters are essential. We see, therefore, that we want quality and disposition before anything when selecting polo ponies.

As regards actual conformation, I think the best

way to judge a pony is to get, first of all, the general impression as the pony is walked or ridden past. If this is satisfactory, examine the pony in detail. First stand in front of the pony held by an assistant, stripped of everything but headcollar or bridle. From the front, the head, ears, and eyes can be examined. A narrow forehead denotes want of brain, and such an animal may be difficult to train. Heavy ears show want of quality, and small eyes, especially with white round the pupils, are seldom satisfactory. From the head, look down to the forelegs. To examine these properly the feet must be in line. The forelegs should be straight and perpendicular. If one turns out or turns in at the fetlock this is a weakness. If both turn out, the pony will brush when galloping. If both turn in, I would reject the pony without hesitation. The feet should be a pair, but I have known many first-class ponies with odd feet. Having finished the examination from the front, move to the near side, the assistant standing in front of the pony. The shape of the neck must then be carefully looked at. If longer below, from the gullet to the breast bone, than above from the poll to the withers, the pony is ewe-necked and will carry the head too high. This is a grave defect, and if the pony is otherwise unsatisfactory, he should be rejected. Then look at the slope of the shoulders and the way the pony stands up in front.

A long shoulder is not the essential point for galloping or for being active, but an upright *humerus*.

This is the short bone which connects the shoulder blade to the forearm, and the nearer to the perpendicular this is, the easier will the pony raise the forelegs, giving him a longer stride and making him a safe and active mount. To judge a good shoulder is more difficult than any other part in the anatomy of a horse, as it is the most important. By experience and mentally photographing the shoulders of famous ponies, the eye will be trained to see at a glance whether the lines are good or bad. Even the best judges make mistakes over the shoulder because some animals are most deceptive when standing. When galloping, the action in front, that is to say, the way the forelegs are raised, is the best test of a good shoulder.

From the shoulder look at the chest. The chest of a horse is just behind the elbow, and not in front of the forelegs as is sometimes thought. The chest should be deep and stand away from the elbow, making the seat of the girth several inches behind the point of the elbow. The position of the girth is also a good indication of a good shoulder, and the lateral measurement from the girth to the point of the shoulder, which is the joint of the humerus and scapula, is no bad test of an active horse.

Now is the time to look at the forelegs. If the forelegs are true, a perpendicular line down the centre of the forearm will pass through the knee, behind the canon-bone, and touch the ground close behind the heel. The slope of the pasterns must

neither be too upright nor too sloping. About 60° is the best angle.

From the legs, look up to the barrel. The back should be straight and round, not sloping like the roof of a house. The shorter the back the better, though if highly-bred, many ponies are marvellous polo ponies in spite of a long back, provided the short ribs are long and horizontal. A well-shaped horse has three distinct curves below the barrel, the curve of the chest, which is downwards, the seat of girth, which is upwards, and the belly, which is also downwards.

For pace, well-developed withers are most popular, but low, broad withers are the best qualification for weight-carrying power, and players standing 13 stone and over should look at this point. A high croup or jumping-bone looks ugly, but is no disqualification, nor is a sloping or goose rump anything but an eye-sore. The quarters cannot be too well developed, and should run into strong muscular second thighs or gaskins. The hocks may be considered as taking an important place in the points of the pony only secondary to the shoulders. Weak or badly-shaped hocks not only prevent a horse moving quickly and stopping suddenly, but being the seat of spavin soon cause lameness. Hocks well let down is an expression often used and seldom understood. It means a hock close to the ground owing to a short cannon-bone and a long os calcis bone to give the proper leverage. Hocks slightly bent are preferable to straight hocks,

that is, when the leg below the hock is perpendicular.

Having moved to the offside, look over the horse again to see if any defect shows itself, for sometimes a horse may appear all right on one side, and owing to a "dropped hip" or other injury on the offside may not be symmetrical.

Then, standing behind the horse look particularly for "hip down" or "dropped hip," a very common thing with imported horses, and one often overlooked. I have known many owners quite unaware that a certain animal of theirs had a hip down, never having examined it carefully from behind. I remember on one recent occasion speaking about a pony with a dropped hip, whose name I had forgotten. The owner declared he had no such pony, and was most astonished when the fact was pointed out to him. Being a very good judge of a horse, he thought it must have been a recent injury; but having known the pony for two years, I could assure him it was there when he bought it. From behind, look at the muscles of the thighs, lifting up the tail to do so. Good quarters are deceptive unless the thighs between the legs are well developed and are not split up, having daylight between them. From this position the forelegs can be seen, and any tendency to brush will be evident from the appearance of the fetlocks. Brushing need not disqualify a polo pony if otherwise good, as the fetlocks can be protected. In a hunter or troop horse it is a grave defect, as, when tired, the constant brushing is

more severe, and bad lameness is the certain result. The position of the hocks is also to be seen from behind. Hocks slightly tied in will not affect a pony much, but if the point of the hock turns out, I would reject him without hesitation, this being a sign of weak conformation.

Having looked at an animal from all sides, the last and most crucial test is to sit in the saddle, or if a harness horse, and this is not possible, to look down upon him from a raised platform like the box seat of a coach. From the saddle, the shape of the head, the ears, and the neck can be seen better than from the ground, and a horse's character is discernible to the eye of a practised judge. Moreover, the shoulder can now be estimated at its proper value by the way the forelegs are raised. A good shoulder gives the rider the feeling of security, and, at a trot, enables him to see the point of the knee, and sometimes the hoof as the leg is drawn forward. With young horses, and especially Arabs, which have never had the muscles of the shoulder developed by long steady work, it is very difficult to say if a shoulder is good or bad until in the saddle. Perhaps the best test is the way a horse walks down a steep place. If the shoulder is good, he steps down fearlessly, and the rider does not feel the horse is likely to fall.

It is only by experience that a polo player will learn to form a correct estimate of the qualifications of a pony, and at first he will be inclined to reject several for faulty conformation, which in

reality were well adapted for his work. On the other hand, he will be anxious sometimes to overlook a weakness because he likes the general appearance. In selecting animals for purchase, there is one golden rule: "The strength of a chain is that of its weakest link." A thin chain with no weak link is far stronger than a big chain with one link that will not stand a strain. So, the best-shaped horse is useless for fast work if he has some defect in conformation that will prevent him working sound. It is constantly said that horses gallop in all shapes, but this is surely a dealer's proverb, and the truth is refuted by the fact that a good judge can pick out of a mob of horses those that are the most suitable for whatever purpose he requires them. To do this, the eye must be trained to detect at a glance any defect and to discover the weak link after examination. It then requires much experience to estimate whether the weakest part of the horse will stand the strain of work or not. It must be remembered that there are very few polo ponies whose conformation shows no weak link, and to look for perfection before buying a polo pony is to limit one's interest in polo to that of an onlooker. At the same time, a theoretical knowledge of the points of the horse, added to by the advice and experience of an old hand, will soon teach a man to be a good judge himself, whereas to learn by experience alone takes a long time and is an expensive amusement.

There are some points for which I would reject

any pony for polo unless already a first-class polo pony. A bad, common head denotes coarse breeding, and such are not worth the bother of training. They must be slow if not stupid. A small eye, or a white eye, may be found in well-bred animals but denote stubbornness, and a tendency to pull.

A ewe-neck is a grave defect unless already rectified by artistic training, and even then cannot be relied upon. A bad shoulder is useless for any but slow polo. Weak forelegs, especially if tied in close below the knee, are bound to give way with fast galloping. A well-shaped foreleg with a short cannon-bone, and the back of the tendon parallel to the front of the cannon-bone, is much stronger than a foreleg half an inch larger in circumference which is badly shaped. A good shoulder does not require as big a foreleg measurement as a bad shoulder, which takes more weight. At the same time, I would reject any foreleg under $6\frac{1}{2}$ inches. Seven inches will carry thirteen stone at polo, and any man over that weight should look for seven and a quarter.

Always reject for a weak or slack loin. Such animals may look well when in dealer's condition, but will never work. With a troop horse, the loin is the most important point of all in a horse. A weak loin will not carry weight for any length of time, and any great strain produces fever, loss of appetite, and collapse. A horse with a good loin will go through a campaign even if the forelegs are weak and the head common, whereas the best bred

animals give in unless the loin is shaped to do continuous hard work on limited fare.

I would always reject a pony with both fore feet turned in, or with feet showing a liability to laminitis. Old ponies usually have some thickening of the lateral cartilage of the fore feet, and even signs of ring bone. Unless the joint is so affected as to prevent its action, slight ossification need not be a cause for rejection. Similarly spavin is an unsoundness, and in a young pony should be a bar to purchase, whereas in an old pony it might not affect the working powers, though of course the price should be reduced 40 or 50 per cent.

From these remarks, I want my readers to understand that the difficulties to be met with are not those of deciding the good points and the bad, but in forming a correct estimate of the weak points, and in forming an opinion as to the probabilities of the animal standing the test of fast work. There is no doubt whatever that any weak spot will make itself manifest with fast work, for it is pace that breaks down horses, not weight alone. For racing, therefore, conformation must be more perfect than for hunting or polo, and animals that would not stand either, will work for years in harness without shewing any signs of weakness.

Blood will go far to covering many a weakness, and must always be taken into consideration; but blood will not enable a weak loined troop horse to carry a military saddle and equipment on service, or a pony to play polo if wrong in the feet.

CHAPTER XV

THE GAME

A VERY noticeable feature about Indian polo of the present day is the marked improvement during the past few years. Combined play is now the rule rather than the exception, and even beginners understand from the first that every place in the game has its duties, and endeavour to perform them. The days of brilliant individual play, when players, like Colonel Heera Singh of Patiala, could win matches off their own sticks, are gone. To win good tournaments in these days, combination must be added to individual skill. The success of teams which trusted to individual skill received its death-blow some ten years ago when the Rugby Team at home, and that of the Durham Light Infantry in India, simultaneously introduced combined play, and for three years in succession were undefeated. In England Rugby won the Champion Cup four times, and in India the Durham Light Infantry were undefeated in fourteen consecutive Polo Tournaments.

I do not wish to convey that these two clubs were the only teams that played with combination,

but they were the first to study polo as a scientific game, and to introduce the same art in their play as we find in the best Hockey and Association Football Teams. Since that time, every first class team in India has adopted similar tactics, but the most successful are those in which every player has not only acquired a thorough knowledge of the game, but are also proficient in the use of the stick. It must be evident that until all four players can be depended on to pass the ball with a reasonable degree of certainty, no real combination is possible. On the other hand, a well trained team of good players will always defeat any four individual players in spite of their being more brilliant hitters, provided the mounting of each team is equal.

Before describing in detail the action of each player in the different phases of the game, I wish to say something about the various polo tactics adopted. In most of the best teams in India the tactics adopted lie in having three forwards and a reliable back, and no doubt when it is possible to obtain a back whom the team can depend upon to resist the efforts of the opposing forwards, this system is the most effective. Such a team, however, unless capable of adapting its tactics to meet every kind of opponent, will always fail when it meets a good team whose forwards are capable of getting the better of even so good a back. For this reason I prefer the team being divided into two forwards and two backs. Provided every man can be relied upon, the work is more equally divided, and the

players have not that feeling of anxiety when the game is most difficult, which is so fatal to success. To carry out this combination, however, the two forwards must be prepared to play as No. 1 or No. 2 according to circumstances, and the two Backs must also interchange so frequently that they cannot look on either place as their own except when the ball is out of play.

When describing the duties of the various players, I propose to enter into detail with regard to some of the common variations of the game. I do not recommend that my suggestions be adopted universally. On the contrary, to do so would enable other teams to know how to defend themselves, but I hope by giving a few illustrations, to encourage teams to work out for themselves certain combinations on paper which can be brought into practice as the occasion occurs. Success will then depend on a strong combined attack with sufficient adaptability to vary the form to break through the opponent's defence. Intelligent combination will of course depend on the art of accurate passing, until that point in the field is reached when this gives way to goal-getting. This brings us back to the beginning, that no combined play is possible unless every player is good with the stick.

DUTIES OF NUMBER 1 OR FIRST FORWARD

It is sometimes thought that the place of No. 1 or First Forward, is the least important in the game,

as it is the least popular; but the more I see of first-class polo, the more certain am I that without a very good man in this place no team can hope for success. Since the abolition of the offside rule the position of No. 1 has increased so much in importance that it has become an open question whether the best player should be sent forward as No. 1 or No. 2. On the whole, I think the two forwards are equally important, and am inclined to think the better of the two should play No. 1.

Without offside, many modifications are necessary in the play of all in a team, but more especially in that of No. 1 and Back. That the new style of play for No. 1 has not been generally grasped is evident in watching even the best players. The majority of players in this place appear to think that "no offside" absolves them from the former disagreeable duty of riding the Back. The result may be a few goals, but too often it means the loss of a match owing to the opposite Back being unhampered. A brilliant First Forward will so hamper the opposite Back that his side will be unable to place its accustomed reliance upon him, and must support him by the No. 3 or Half-back, and so disorganize the side. I have seen the best teams collapse from this cause, and the majority of the onlookers being unable to realize the reason, have looked upon the defeat as unaccountable. A player, therefore, in order to play First Forward must, in addition to being a good rider and goal-getter, acquire a thorough knowledge of the game in theory

as well as in practice, so as to be able to alter his tactics to suit the Back to whom he is opposed. To continually lie wide of the Back waiting for the ball to be passed up is very effective play in bad polo. In tournament polo it is very fatal, for the remaining three players are practically playing against four and are kept continually on the defensive. The best No. 1 in modern polo is the player who observes the principles of twenty years ago, but who takes advantage of the fact that whereas formerly he always started half a length behind the Back, now he can always get half a length in front. This advantage is so great that the Back cannot afford to play a forward game and must keep on the defensive. If, however, the No. 1 allows him to run loose, "no offside" is in his favour instead of the reverse.

I therefore think the duties of No. 1 have in no way changed, but he is now placed in a far better position to carry them out. These duties are three, all equally important—

1. To prevent the opposite back getting the ball.
2. To assist his own No. 2 to reach it.
3. To score goals.

Of course riding-off forms one and a very important means of preventing the opposite Back getting the ball. There are, however, two other ways, so often neglected, which are just as important. One is, to hook the stick of the Back whenever within reach. A little practice will enable

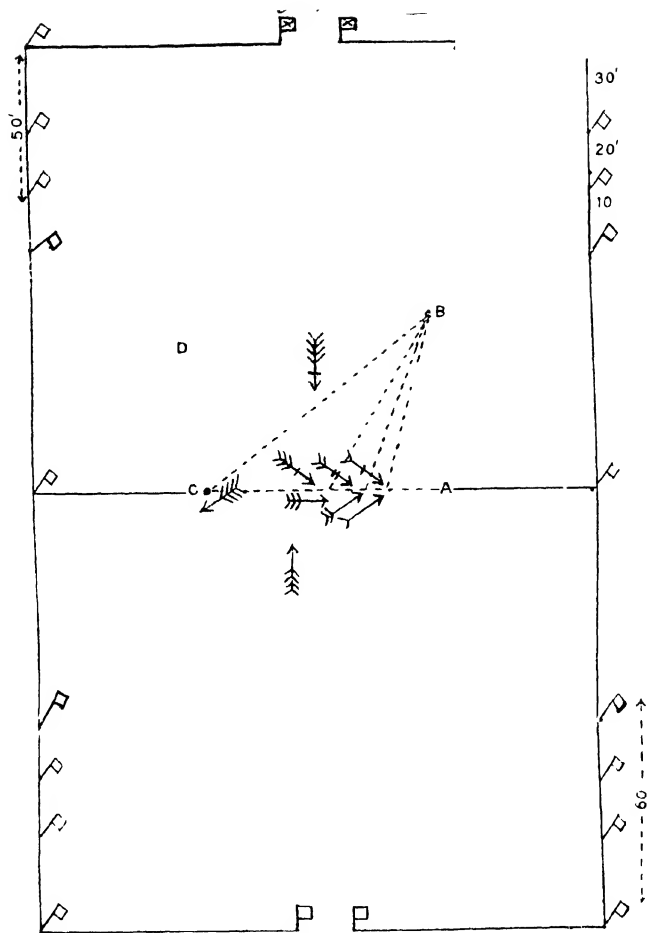
a player to strike the stick of a man about to hit a back-hander, or if he does not swing it, but pushes it up, it may be hooked over his shoulder.

A second and sometimes more effective way is to prevent the ball reaching the Back, by blocking it and passing it to his Second Forward. It is evident that a No. 1 who hits a back-hander towards the opposite Back is disregarding the first principle of his duties, and is deliberately giving him the ball instead of preventing him from getting it. The only time a No. 1 is justified in hitting a back-hander towards the opposite goal is when near enough to score, or if he can be certain of his No. 2 reaching the ball before one of the other side. On the other hand, he can constantly assist his No. 2, by placing the ball for him, wide of the Back, as will shortly be described in detail. Lastly a No. 1 must be a good goal getter. He has more opportunities of scoring than any other member of the team, and if clever with the stick can frequently make goals after slipping the Back and taking the ball down the ground.

Perhaps the most common fault of a First Forward is to pay too much attention to the ball when the Back is waiting for his opportunity to slip the No. 1. No man can watch the ball as well as the Back, and at first it is better to watch the Back irrespective of the position of the ball. Later on when a No. 1 becomes good, he will learn when to give his attention to the Back and when to wait for the ball. In the same way, at first a No. 1

when watching a Back should remain as close to him as possible, keeping half a length to the good, but never disengaging the ponies. In this way he can force the Back to move at an angle of 45° from the line he wishes to go. Later on, when the No. 1 becomes first-class, he will do better to ride a little wide, and when he comes in to ride off, the swerve of his pony will carry off the Back, just like the lee-way of a sailing boat when altering her course. On the other hand, if two Forwards are good with the stick, but not well enough mounted to produce any effect on a Back, they can prove most dangerous if they pass to each other, 30 yards wide of the back, who can then do nothing but wander from one to the other in the vain attempt to reach the ball. It is evident that such a game can only be effective if both Forwards can play equally well in either place, and it is good practice for them to play First and Second Forward alternately.

In Example I when starting the game it is immaterial which Forward meets the ball first, but if No. 1 gets on the ball, No. 2 must go to the Back and act as No. 1. For this reason, if the Second Forward is as good with his stick, I prefer him to meet the ball first. If he gets it, he gains the initiative and at this stage of the game when all are inclined to be excited, a clever piece of play often results in a score. Being on the move, his pony will have crossed the line AC, whether he gets it or not. The remainder of his side must therefore hit to B, where the No. 2 will be expecting the ball. If both sides



STARTING THE GAME.

In all the following illustrations the opposing Teams are shewn as below.

→	Number I	→
→→	Number II	→→
→→→	Half back.	→→→
→→→→	Back	→→→→

line up like the Y team, the ball may pass through all six players and go to C. The Back of Y team must then go forward boldly but must never hit to D, as is so usually the case. To do so, is certain to allow X Back to reach the ball first. On the other hand, by turning his pony and sending the ball to B he places it for his Forwards, who will by then be in the correct positions, and X team being upset by an unexpected manœuvre may fail to prevent them scoring. The value of gaining an advantage at the first is immense. It shows the opposite Backs that they must play a defensive game, and gives them an undue fear of the hostile Forwards. Moreover it may keep up that feeling of nervousness which attacks so many players at the beginning of a match, and which, with some otherwise very good players, does not wear off until the game is in their favour.

As soon as any one gets the ball, No. 1 must make his way to the enemy's Back, waiting for an opportunity to be of service to his side. If the ball is travelling towards his own goal, he should place himself close to the back and force him away from the direction of the ball taking him away at an angle of 45° . The Back, to avoid being out of the game, must disengage and try to slip the No. 1; but a good Forward will again ride him off and prevent the Back going up into the game. This game is very hampering to a Back, who can only wait for a ball passed back on which he can turn and put in a back-hander. When a No. 1 becomes

a really brilliant player, he can best assist his side by placing himself between the Back and the game, preventing him from going up to meet a ball, and when he sees it hit back by one of his own side, getting to the ball before the Back. As soon as No. 1 has got the ball, the Back must either wait about to see what the No. 1 is about to do, or go back towards his own goal. In the former case, the No. 2 coming up fast has every chance of slipping the Back, provided No. 1 has placed the ball for him well. (Example II). If the Back gallops towards his own goal, as he should do, No. 1 can take the ball on himself with short strokes until the Back comes into him, when he can pass across to his No. 2, who by this time will have got into position, level with his No. 1, and 30 yards clear of the field. (Example III). On no account must he hit the ball so hard in the direction of the Back as to give him the chance of getting to it before it passes through the goal. A No. 1 who can keep the ball in this manner may often score himself by dribbling a little wide of the Back so that he cannot reach the ball without crossing. When passing to another player both should be level and the ball should go across at an angle of 45° to the general direction of the ground. This enables the other forward to pick up the ball without checking his pace, for it is this check which enables one of the opposite side to catch him.

When the ball has passed the Back, and he is riding for his back-hander, the No. 1 has his most

difficult work to perform. If brilliantly mounted on a pony which can work a Back off his line from behind, he may succeed in spoiling his game. More often he will find this impossible, as the Back will usually be mounted on as quick and on a heavier pony. In spite of being unable to prevent the Back reaching the ball, he must force him to go at his fastest pace, at which a ball is often missed or bungled. If he finds he cannot prevent the stroke, it is better to check just before the stroke and endeavour to meet the ball, placing his pony where he expects the ball to go. If the ball rises, it may hit the breast of the No. 1's pony or may strike the pony's forelegs or meet the stick. On paper this sounds cruel, but it does not hurt a pony, if fit, more than a hockey ball hurts a man, and I have never known a pony suffer even temporary lameness from a polo ball. I can recall many goals obtained from ponies breasting a back-hander, and if near goal it puts a Back in a helpless position.

A No. 1 who is good at hooking sticks may often succeed, not only in preventing a back-hander, but also in taking the ball on himself with a near side stroke. Some of the brilliant Indian players are most clever at this, flicking away an adversary's stick by a turn of the wrist, and following it with a near side drive. In the same way, a Back who has slipped the No. 1 and is galloping up into the game, may often be hampered by a good Forward who, instead of riding alongside, drops back straight behind and interposes his stick as the adversary is

hitting forward. The Back may claim a foul, and a bad umpire may allow the claim, as I have sometimes seen, but the Rule entitles a player to crook a stick if "immediately behind."

Many other variations of the game will occur to players accustomed to play forward, the most important being when the ball is hit out from behind and when penalties are enforced, and a No. 1 must learn all these by practice. As I will refer to his place again when giving in detail the duties of other players, I will abstain from doing so here.

The combined play of two Forwards is the most effective means of winning matches, and converts the place of No. 1 into the most enjoyable in the field, in spite of the bruises that are unavoidable. I cannot resist reminding both Forwards that their places are far more interchangeable than formerly, and whichever of the two is leading becomes for the time No. 1.

The No. 2 who finds himself in the position of No. 1, and who there fails to act loyally as No. 1, cannot claim to play a first-class game however brilliant a striker he may be.

There is a tendency at present for both forwards to play a loose game, riding wide of the Back and passing to each other. Against any but a first-class team this is often most effective, but I have seen these tactics fail so often where opposed to two reliable and well mounted Backs that I am convinced it is a real economy of force for the No. 1 to bear constantly in mind that his first duty is to prevent the opposite Back from getting the ball.

CHAPTER XVI

NUMBER 2, OR SECOND FORWARD

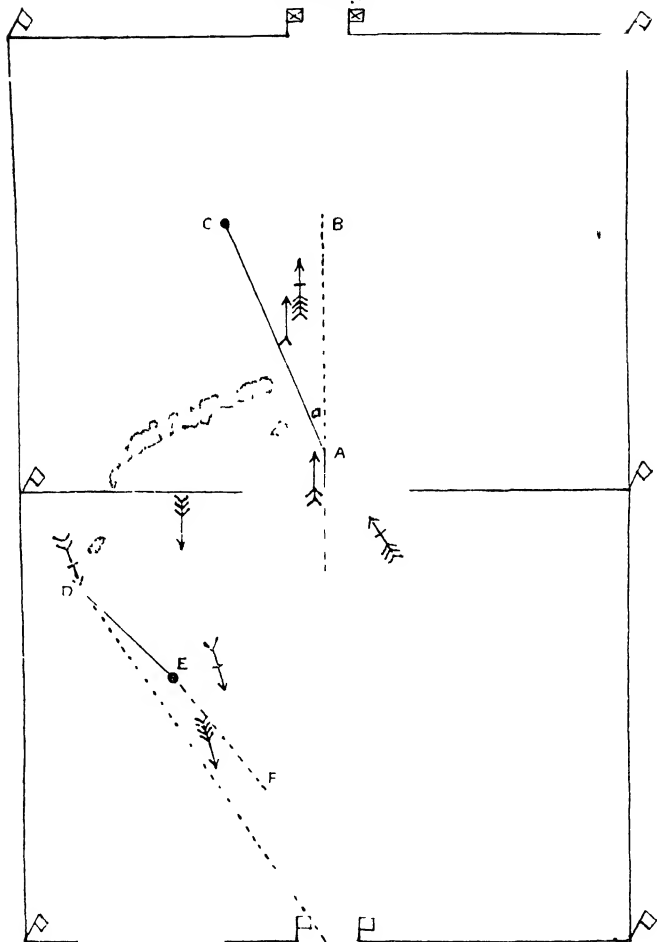
OF all the places in the team, that of No. 2 or Second Forward is certainly the easiest to play, but perhaps the most difficult to play brilliantly. Perhaps it is that as soon as a player becomes very good he finds he is wanted more to fill the responsible posts of Back or Half-back, and his services are lost to the forward part of the game. The fact remains, that though we see many good Backs there are few who stand out from the good players as really brilliant Forwards. I mean a man who can be depended on to pick up a ball passed back before any of the opposite side can reach it ; who can take a ball down the ground at the fastest pace, making half strokes when necessary to prevent the opposite Back getting it ; who can pass a ball to another of his side ; who can take the place of No. 1 when he finds himself in front ; and who is a deadly shot at goal. A player of this description is a terror to his opponents and enables every man of his own side to play more collectedly, in confidence that on every opportunity a vigorous attack will be made on the enemy's goal. To be a player of

this kind requires much practice, and practice at a fast pace. I know many players who are very deadly in a station game, but who cannot score if forced to gallop, or if in danger of being caught by a good Half-back. In first-class polo, the game is always fast, and fast practice is the only way to make fast play effective. No. 2, therefore, must ensure that his strokes are true when all out, and this is where the majority fail. For this reason, I am sure a No. 2 will do well to ride Arabs. They are easier to play, and on them it is far easier to hit straight, going fast. Moreover they do not get excited from continuous fast work, and when pulled out for a second and third time are just as good as in the first period. There are Walers which are just as brilliant but such are the exceptions.

Though I do not recommend what are termed fancy strokes when a simple drive is possible, the No. 2 should be able to score from any position, and if a very fine shot, I would not limit the distance from which he tries at goal. At the same time, he should know his own capabilities and never risk a doubtful shot when a half stroke would put him in a position from which a certain goal can be made. When this player becomes stick-perfect, his chief fault usually lies in selfishness. Knowing himself to be the best goal getter, he refuses to pass to others, and so many an opportunity is lost. This grave fault is the more noticeable if he is the captain of his side, or if from his rank the remainder of the team are unwilling to find fault.

EXAMPLE IV.

*Number 2 hitting wide to prevent
the Back reaching the Ball.*



*Number 2 making half strokes to prevent
the Back getting the Ball.*

EXAMPLE V.

Having obtained possession of the ball, No. 2 has to decide at a glance whether to drive forward, to keep the ball with half strokes, or to pass. Although he has other duties, his value depends on his correct appreciation of each situation as it occurs, and the way he can carry it out. If the No. 1 is well into the Back, he should certainly drive, and if he hits in the proper direction he has a reasonable chance of success. The proper direction is not necessarily towards the opponents' goal.

In Example IV, if No. 2 hits towards goal, to B, the Back is almost sure to return it. If, however, he hits to C, he has every chance of getting it again, and though it is a more difficult shot at goal, it is far better to miss a goal than to have the game turned into an attack by the opposite side. On this occasion a half stroke would be a mistake, because X No. 3 being so close would catch No. 2 before he could hit it again.

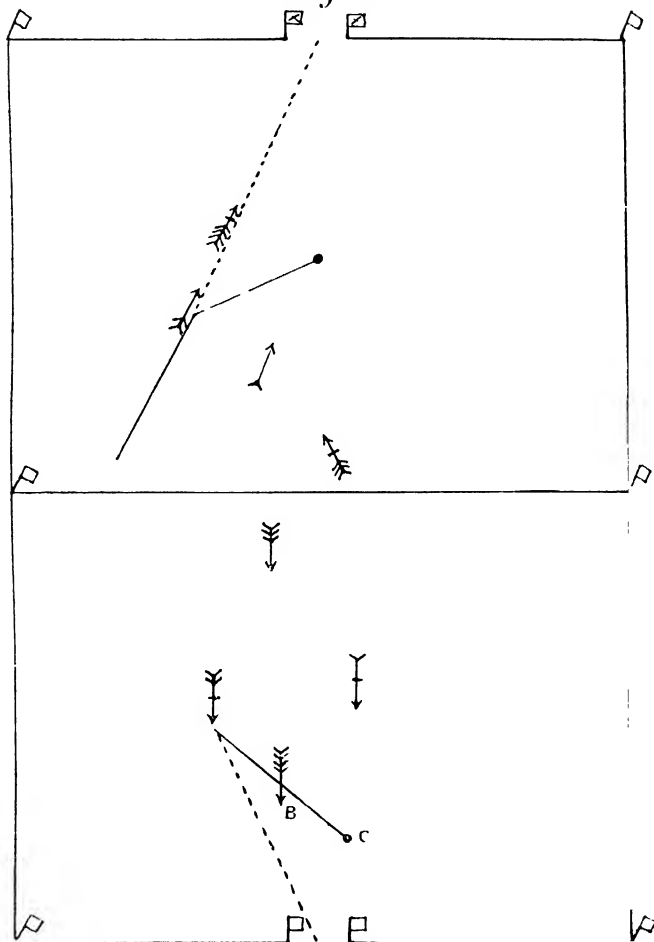
In Example V, No. 2 finding his No. 1 unable to reach the Back, must make a half stroke to E. This gives No. 1 time to reach the Back, and as Y 3, is not up to X 2, the latter will have time to hit to F. By this time his No. 1 will have got well into the Back, and the goal is open. The position of the opposite No. 3 is an important consideration, for half strokes take a fraction of a second longer, and during this he may interfere by hooking the stick and so prevent a second stroke. When No. 2 finds the Back between himself and the goal without his No. 1 to assist him, he has two courses open,

to keep the ball with short strokes, or to leave it for his No. 1 and to ride the Back. (Example VI.) As he cannot see the relative positions of the players behind him, he can best play for his side by keeping the ball, that is dribbling it away from the Back so that he cannot reach it without crossing, until his No. 1 is in a position to take it on giving him the word "Ride." On this, he should at once assume the duties of No. 1, leaving the ball with his First Forward, who for the time becomes No. 2. The latter must be careful not to tell the man on the ball to resign it until he can be certain of getting it, as the opposite No. 3 will by this time be so close to him that he may not reach it, and it is better to let the No. 2 keep the ball than to leave it for one of the opposite side.

The last problem a Second Forward has to solve at a glance is when to pass, and on the success of this manœuvre very much depends. It is fatal to pass too soon, but this mistake is far less frequent than waiting too long. Much depends on mutual understanding and confidence between players, and the less calling to each other the better it is. It often happens that No. 1 and No. 2 get away and have only the Back to interfere with them. Having the No. 1 in close attendance, the Back finds he cannot stop the man on the ball. When within shooting distance, the Back must leave the No. 1 and go to the striker to force him to hit wild or make him miss. In Example VII, as soon as the Back has altered his direction to B, No. 2 should

EXAMPLE VI.

Y. Number 2 placing the Ball wide for his Number 1 and riding to the Back.



X. Number 2 passing to Number 1 when threatened by Back.

EXAMPLE VII.

pass to No. 1 to C. The latter can not only reach the ball before the Back, but has also an easy shot. It will be seen that at the moment of passing the two Forwards are level in the field, and the pass is at an angle of 45° . This combination of the two Forwards should be of so frequent occurrence that the opponent's Half-back must remain always on the defensive. To see a Half-back up in the game denotes weak Forwards opposed to him, and the way to relieve this pressure is to have two Forwards who are so dangerous that the Half-back dare not play up.

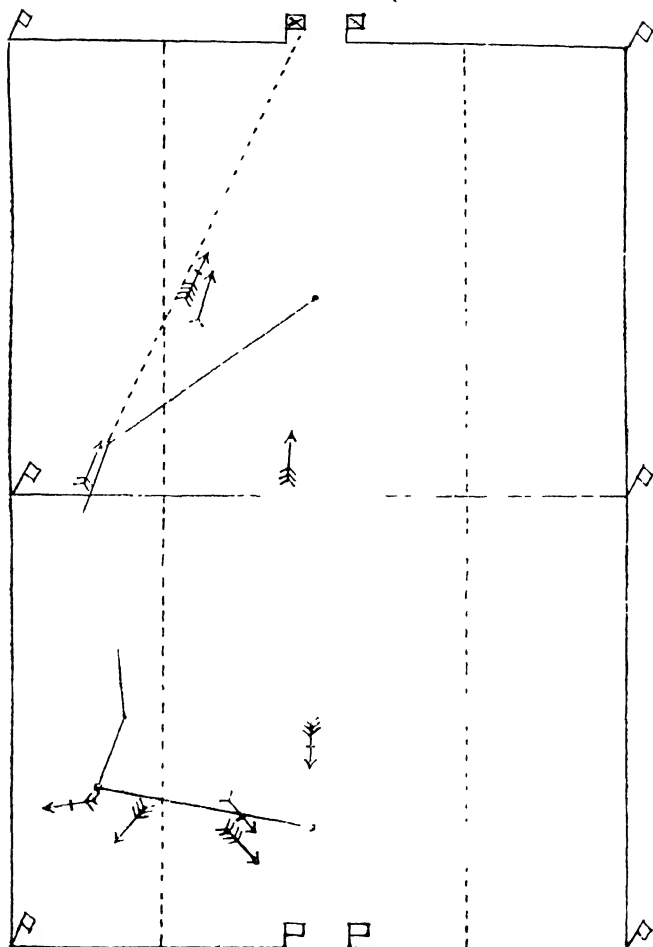
The No. 2 should play as much as possible in the centre of the ground, but of course will frequently find himself in the outside quarters. Here an opportunity is often lost because this Forward continues to play No. 2 instead of passing in to his Half-back, who should then assume the position of a Forward. By altering their places, these two players not only gain time, but also upset the calculations of their opponents, who naturally expect the ball to be hit in the direction of their goal, and ride to the line to which the ball will come. In Example VIII, Y No. 2 being in the left quarter, instead of going on with the ball, makes a half stroke to allow his No. 1 to get up on the inside (right) of the Back, and his No. 3 to get level with him, and in the centre of the ground. He then cuts the ball across at an angle of 45° and falls behind as Half-back. If well carried out, this stroke gives the No. 3 a good opening, and for the time he

becomes No. 2. The only difficulty is judging the proper moment to centre, and to pass well forward. If the ball is in the right quarter the same manœuvre should be carried out. If a good No. 2 can be depended on to do this, his Half-back will always be there expecting the ball, and no call or signal will be required. At first it is better to institute some private code until the players know exactly what to expect. Neither of these strokes can be looked upon as difficult, though of course they must be practised.

It must not be thought that No. 2 has only to attack. In defence, that is when his own goal is being threatened, he is most wanted by his own side. He must then decide how best he can assist his Backs. If he rides the opposite Half-back, he can prevent this player from meeting the ball passed back by his own side, but then he cannot be sure of picking up the ball. To disregard the Half-back, however, is to allow an important player to go loose, and this is too dangerous. It is here that a No. 2 must show his value. He must attend to the enemy's Half-back but he must do so in such a way that he will be the first to pick up a back-hander from his own side, and convert a defence into an attack. There is nothing so disappointing to a Back after a good defensive back-hander, to turn and see the ball in the possession of one of the opponents. However good the opposite Half Back may be, a No. 2 has the advantage of knowing the play of his own Backs, and can tell the place

EXAMPLE VIII.

Y Number 2 placing the Ball for his Number 3 and becoming Half Back.



X Number 2 drawing off the opponents to the right and centering to his Number 3

EXAMPLE IX.

to where they will hit, as well as how hard the ball will come. Many mistakes will of course occur, and often he will be disappointed, but if his judgment is for the most part sound, he will obtain a distinct advantage in the end, nor can he be held responsible for want of play on the part of those whose duty it is to feed him.

The play of No. 2 must vary with the position of the ball on the ground. When within 80 yards of his own goal, his play must be defensive, but of course the best defensive is a successful counter-attack, so he must place himself in the best position to pick up a ball. If the ball is in the outside quarter but near his own goal, the ball must be kept in the outside quarter until the half-way flag is reached, and then it should be centred. In the enemy's half, it may sometimes be an advantage to keep the ball down the side line to draw off the opponent to the side before centreing to the Half-back, but the general tendency must be towards the centre line in the enemy's half of the ground and away from the centre line when within shooting distance of one's own goal. (Example IX.)

It stands to reason that the possibility of No. 2 playing a successful game depends much on the opposition of the Half-back opposed to him, at the same time, if he is quick at picking up a ball, and is always looking out for the opportunity of passing to his No. 1 or No. 3, he will assist his side to the best of his ability even if he cannot win the match.

CHAPTER XVII

NUMBER 3, OR HALF-BACK

THE place of Half-back, although the most difficult in the game, is perhaps the most interesting. This is the place which should, if possible, be filled by the Captain of the team, being the link between the forwards and the back. From here the Captain can assert himself more than from any other place. By playing well up, he can assist his Forwards to force the game, and by playing more on the defensive he can frustrate the effort of his opponent.

With a well trained team, no one should express his opinions aloud except the Captain, and as Half-back, he is able to do so without the wild shouting which might be necessary if playing Back or No. 2. For a No. 1 to act as Captain is fatal. If there is no one behind who is able to do this for him, a No. 1, if the trainer and Captain of a team, had better play elsewhere, for as No. 1 he cannot see what is going on and is certain to give wrong directions.

Formerly the best player of a team always played Back, but in recent years it has become the custom for Half-back to be filled by the man who is considered the most reliable player. I think this is



MAJOR HOUNS CHINSU I ARVI SUTIRSI

right, and have always recommended its adoption. There is certainly a tendency for the Half-back to play too much on the defensive if the game is going against him, but this is preferable to the Back going up into the game, as used to be the rule rather than the exception, when he was the best player.

The duties of Half-back are twofold. Not only must he feed his Forwards, placing the ball in such a position that they can take it on before the other side can reach it ; but he is also the first line of defence. At one time he will be forcing the game by boldly following close to his Forwards, and a second later he will be galloping back to assist his No. 4 who is in difficulties with two or more of the enemy. Unless well mounted, therefore, Half-back cannot do much for his side. On good ponies, however, he is the most valuable man of the team.

Half-back, if a certain hitter, will always prove useful whatever may be his game, but I recommend the interchangeable Back and Half-back game between these two players, as it saves time and adds an extra man to the team. Moreover, it is a certain way of shaking off an attentive No. 1, who will usually find himself riding the wrong man. At first the two Backs will not change places smoothly at the right moment, and the Back, having become No. 3, will remain there unnecessarily long ; but after playing together in a few matches, each will know the other's game, and much time will be saved. Whenever No. 3 is there to take his place in case of a miss, Back can meet the ball, going on himself and

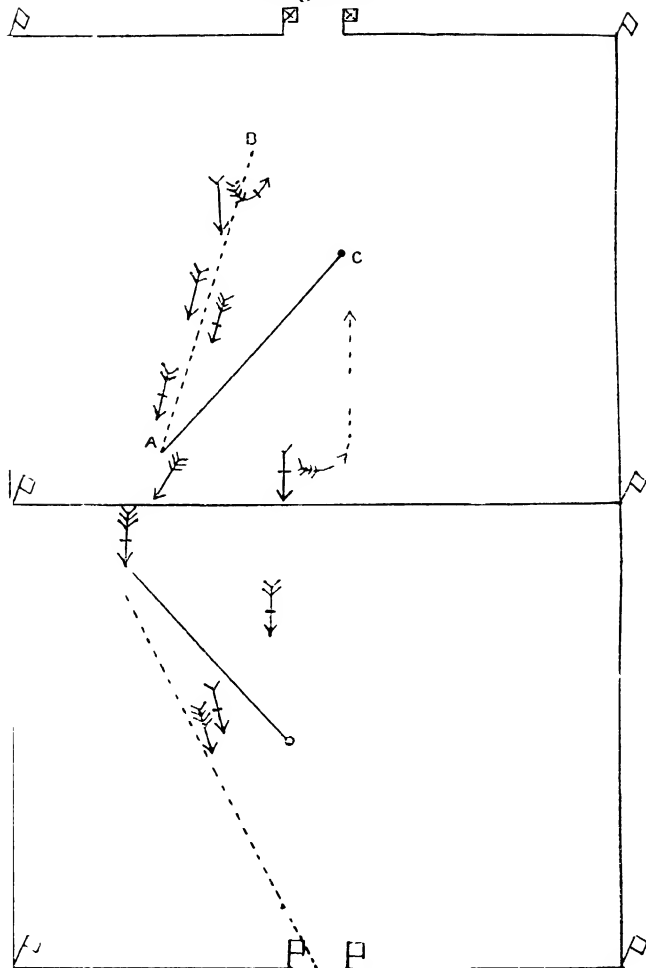
playing Half-back. When the Half-back is nearest the ball for a back-hander, it not only saves time for him to take it, but the Back, by going forward, can himself pick up the ball, practically adding a fifth man to the team for the time being. This game, so far from upsetting the organization of a team, adds to its efficiency, but is only possible when played by two first-class men who know each other's game. In order to resume their original places, the Back, who is now playing No. 3, must wait for an opportunity to fall behind, by getting on to the ball to hit a back-hander to his No. 3, or to enable the latter to meet a ball. This case will occur so often in the game that these two players will find themselves playing alternately Back and Half-back, and only resume their places when the ball is dead. (Example X.)

The Half-back may sometimes drive up the ground himself, but as his chief duty is to feed his Forwards, it is better play for him to centre to his No. 2. (Example XI.) When the ball is in the outside quarters of the ground, this manœuvre is especially valuable, as the opponent's Back will not expect the ball to travel across the ground so wide of the field.

The value of a good Half-back is never more noticeable than when the opponents are hitting out from behind their own line. In India it is usual for a good No. 3 to meet the ball, following up his No. 2. A man who is exceptionally good at this is often very effective, but it is not sound

EXAMPLE X.

*Number 3 placing for his back
and taking his place*

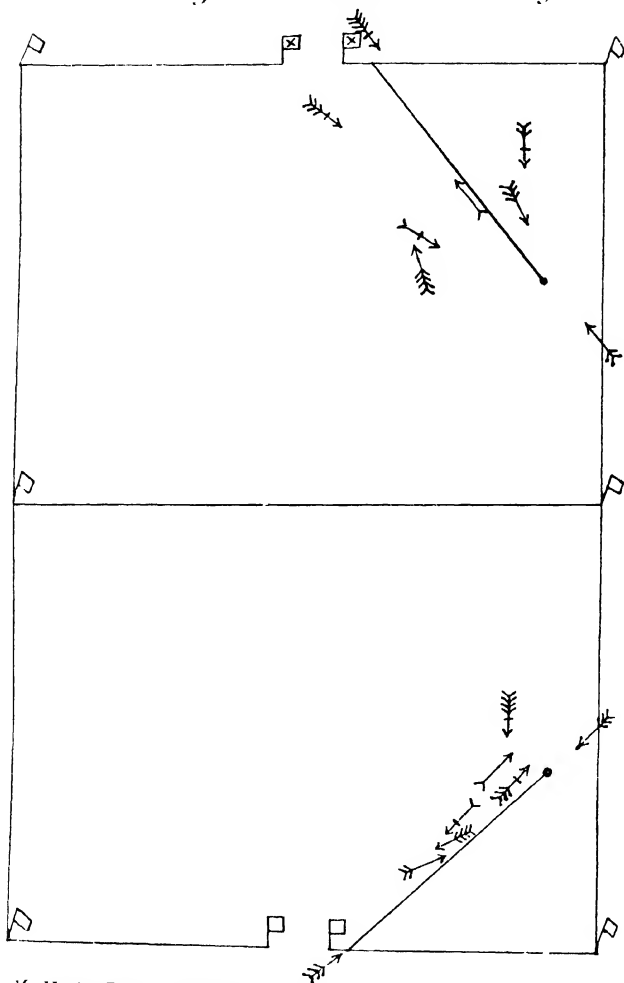


X Number 3 centring for his Number 2.

EXAMPLE XI

EXAMPLE XII.

X Back hitting out, Number 3 defending Goal



*Y Half Back hitting out, Back preventing
X Number 1 from meeting Ball*

EXAMPLE XIII

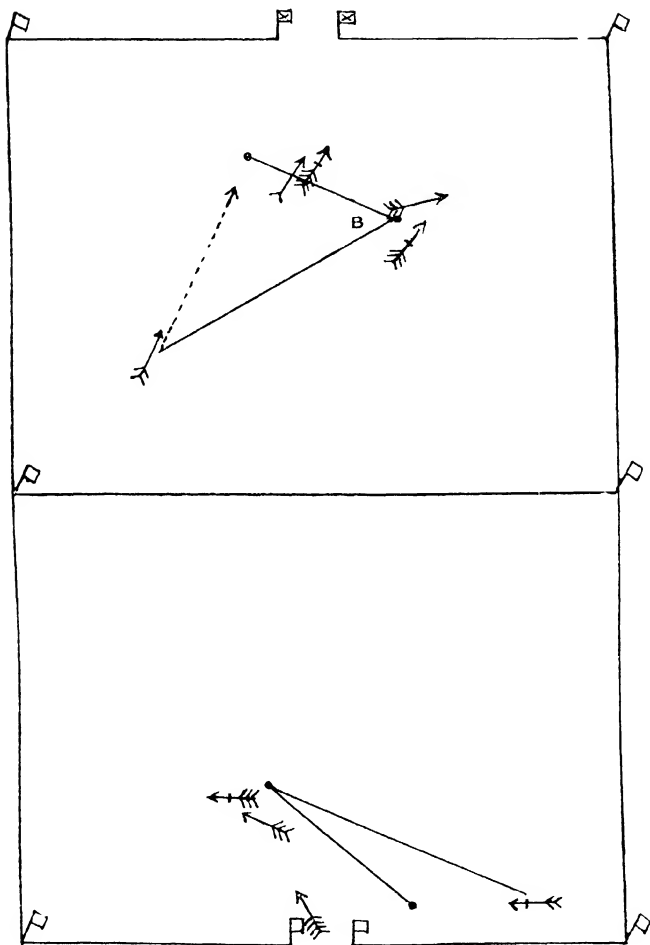
play. If the ball is missed, the two Forwards of the opponents get away, and the Back, not having the assistance of his Half-back, may not be able to defend his goal alone. The No. 3 should so place himself that he must reach the ball before the opposite Forwards, and *by a back-hander* place the ball for his own Forwards to score a goal. By so doing, if he succeeds, the stroke is just as valuable as a drive, and if he misses it, he will still be in a position to prevent a run down the ground by one of his opponents. In Example XII, the places of the various players are shown when the ball is hit out from behind. That of Y No. 2 deserves special notice, as this player seldom remains sufficiently far off to make his stroke with any degree of certainty. Coming in at a gallop the No. 2 reaches the ball before his Half-back, and if he misses, rides on to the centre expecting a back-hander. The No. 1 must cross the 30 yards line at a gallop as soon as the ball crosses the back line, and if dribbled over, he often has a chance of getting it. Moreover, his presence near the ball is always disconcerting to the striker. The No. 2 of the side hitting out should place himself in the best position to pick up the ball on his offside. When hit out to the left, his position should be that of X 2 in Example XII, and when hit out to the right as shown for Y 2 in Example XIII. I think the Back can best defend his goal by going out to the 30 yards line and placing himself facing his own goal, having the advantage of the opposing forward, as Y 4,

Example XIII. He can thus rectify any mistake of his Half-back by a back-hander. It is an advantage for the Half-back to hit out, as he can then follow up the ball maintaining his proper place; whereas if the Back hits out, he must check, and No. 3 cannot possibly get into his place at once.

In Chapter XV, the case of the Half-back changing with his Forward and becoming No. 2 was fully described, and this will no doubt often occur if the No. 2 plays an unselfish game and knows how to pass in from the outside quarter of the ground. The complicated passing of football is hardly applicable to polo, nor is it so necessary. At the same time, a double pass is most effective if the players can be relied upon, and the team has the advantage of a good Back. Theoretically, this would appear possible at any stage of the game, but in practice it is so difficult that it should only be tried to obtain a goal when opposed to a strong defence, through which it is impossible to break in any other way. Even then, the players must steady before passing, and this decrease of pace often results in a stick being hooked. In Example XIV, No. 2 having centred to B, the No. 3, finding the opponents have got between him and the goal owing to the No. 1 being on the wrong side of the Back, passes back to No. 2 who has the goal open to him. I have known only one team carry out this manœuvre with any degree of certainty, and they had played together for three seasons. When the ball is in the corners this double pass is often

EXAMPLE XIV.

Y Number 2 centring to Number 3 who passes back to Number 2.



X. Number 2 passing to Number 3 who returns the Ball to Number 2.

EXAMPLE XV.

most effective, because No. 3, who remains in the centre, returns the ball to No. 2 who is coming up to the goal. (Example XV.)

It may sometimes occur that No. 3 will find himself away with the ball and with only the Back to pass. If either of his Forwards is the next behind him, he must then act as No. 1, keeping the ball and riding on when told by that player. He must resume his place as soon as possible, however, to avoid disorganizing his team.

In the passing game there will be many disappointments. Players will fail to pass accurately, and miss balls passed up, in addition to the many times the players on the other side succeed in intercepting the ball; but a good No. 3 who invariably plays this game will inspire such confidence in his Forwards that they will soon learn to be ready for his centring drives, and the few passes that are successful will more than compensate for all the disappointments.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE BACK

IN station games, it is usual for the player of most experience to play Back, and beginners seldom get the opportunity of learning this place in consequence. As a result, it is thought by the majority of polo players to be the most difficult game of all. So far from this being so, Back is an easier place to fill with credit than any other. Provided a man can hit back-handers with some degree of certainty, he can join in a fairly good game as Back, even when not mounted well and against better players. To play in any other place, would mean that he would be very little use to his side. In second-class polo, an inexperienced player if he can hit back at a gallop would therefore be better placed at Back than as No. 1, the position usually assigned to him. In first-class polo, this is not so, and a reliable Back is a necessity to a first-class team. Unless the Back is capable of holding his own against a No. 1, he will find himself unable to defend his goal, and the score against his side will be out of all proportion to the merits of the teams. At the same time I do not

approve of the best player going Back, as I have already explained at length in Chapter XVII. The Back has more time to act deliberately than any other player, and pulling ponies which would be impossible to manage in any other place can there be ridden with safety.

The duties of the Back are to defend the goal and feed his Forwards. To hit back-handers will not do much good unless they are driven past the opposite Forwards, and even then will not always reach his own Forwards unless placed in the most favourable positions. It is usual for the Back to hit away from his own goal, and towards the enemy's goal in that half of the ground. No doubt this principle is sound, but there are times when it is better to do the reverse if by so doing the ball is placed for one of his own side.

It is true the attention of a good No. 1 makes passing by the Back more difficult, and he is usually content if he can put in a good stroke without considering the positions of the various players.

In Example XVI, the Back would do better to hit back to C instead of to B, although by so doing the ball comes in front of goal. It is easier for his Forwards to get the ball first as the turn keeps it on the offside. Moreover, it often enables the Half-back to reach the ball first, and the Forwards going up have a chance of an opening when the Half-back drives up to them. It is in this way a good Back distinguishes himself, and he must never be satisfied with hitting only.

In Chapter XV, Example 1, I explained how he can best place the ball when the game is being started or thrown in from the side line. If, however, the ball goes out at the side line near the enemy's goal, the Back must remain near the centre line expecting a pass from one of his Forwards. This pass can often be made by a back-hander by No. 3, who has directed his Forwards to let the ball through, by interfering with their opponent instead of trying to hit it themselves. The place for the Back on this occasion is near the 50 yards line. (Example XVII.)

The question as to whether the Back or Half-back should hit out from behind the goal line depends on which is the best striker, but if equally good, the Half-back should certainly undertake this duty. He can then follow up, and will be in his proper place. If the Back hits out, he must assume the place of No. 3 from the first, leaving the latter to defend the goal. For the Back to hit out and check would leave his Forwards unsupported, for the Half-back cannot possibly be in his place unless he remains forward from the first, and leaves his Back entirely alone, a very risky proceeding.

I prefer to see the Half-back hit out on all occasions, and the Back can best assist by placing himself near the opposite No. 1 facing his own goal, in such a position that if his Half-back makes a mistake, he will reach the ball first and put in a back-hander to his Forwards. His position is shown

in Chapter XVII, Example XIII, when Y 4 is placed in the way I recommend.

When the ball is hit out by the other side, the Back must be in the half of the ground where he expects the ball. If the opponents hit across goal it is the duty of the Half-back to watch the centre, but the Back must always be ready for being surprised in this way.

Except when playing up, or if his place can be taken if he misses, the Back must never meet the ball. To do so is too dangerous, for if he misses, it lets in the opposite Forwards with a clear run.

When the ball is within shooting distance of his own goal, the Back can best defend it by going between the flags. From this position, he must meet fearlessly, and a man with a good eye can prevent a ball passing him if within his reach.

A Back must go fast at his balls even when not interfered with. To go slow may make his stroke more certain, but in the mean time the ball will have travelled twenty-five yards further, and this distance must be added to the length of his stroke before it is of the same value to his side. If not a strong hitter, Back must give more attention to placing his balls, and to a rapid return. Even strong hitting does not compensate for erratic placing, and unless the Forwards know where to expect his back-handers to come they will not trust their Back.

Of all faults that the Back is addicted to, that of nervousness in the vicinity of his goal is the worst. It hampers the game of every player on his side,

who soon cease to have any confidence in him. If time does not correct this, he must make up his mind to resign his place to a man who is more reliable even if less brilliant. The Back who is inclined to meet the ball unsupported, or to go up into the game and usurp the duty of the Forwards, can be corrected and made to play in his place; but nerves cannot be controlled, and though to be regretted in other players are fatal for a Back.

The success of teams may appear to be due to fine forward play, but such is not possible unless the Back is reliable. Although he may not get much credit from the public, the Back may congratulate himself whenever a match is won. He may not have shown out as doing more than his fair share of work, but it is such steady players, who never get excited, and who do not attempt to do more than their own work, who are really the best Backs.

CHAPTER XIX

SCORING FROM PENALTIES

IN these days, foul play is quite the exception, but mistakes must always occur, and any mistake which gives either side an advantage demands a penalty. It is very extraordinary how few teams know how to avail themselves of a penalty when allowed, and even throughout a first-class tournament we see penalties producing no score. In the Rules it will be seen that the penalties for fouls consist of, (1) a free hit 50 yards from the centre of the goal ; (2) a free hit from where the foul occurred ; (3) a free hit from the 60 yards line ; (4) the side fouling to hit out from behind.

Penalty Nos. 2 and 3 are alternate penalties, and the side to which the penalty is allowed has the choice. Unless within 50 yards of goal, an advantage is seldom obtained, and even then the odds are against scoring. Unless well within the enemy's half, it is usual to choose penalty No. 3, whereas the free hit is of far more value unless the foul occurs very close to the goal of the side fouled.

The best way to obtain advantage from a free

hit is to place the team as shown in Example XVIII. The striker, instead of driving towards goal, places the ball to either his No. 2 or No. 3, who are sent up well into the game. If the defenders open out and mark the two Forwards, the Back has only one man opposite him and can safely drive straight forward to his No. 1.

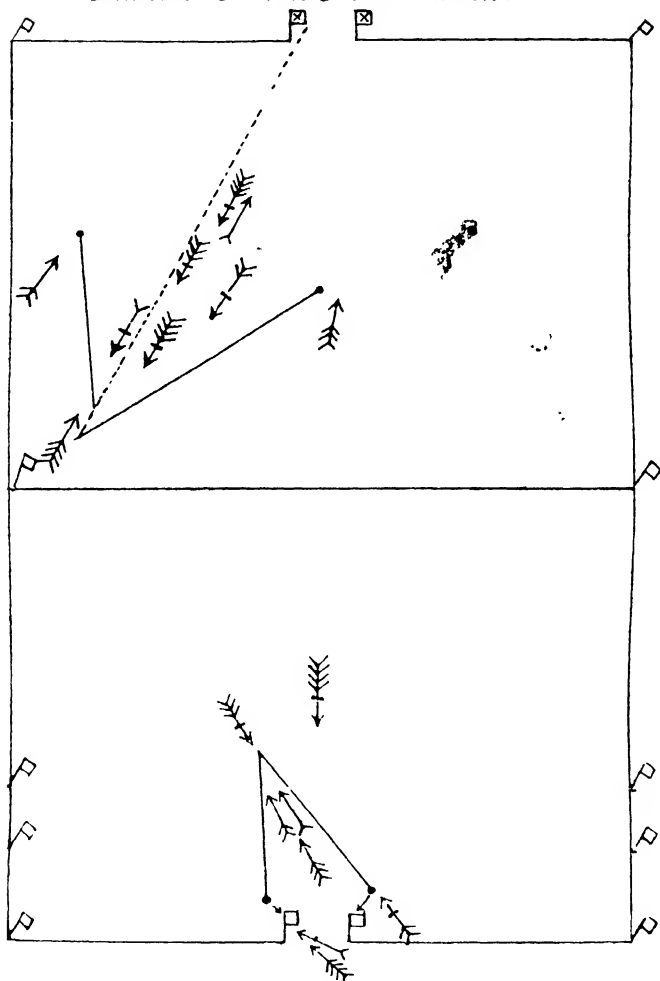
The same tactics may be employed with penalty No. 4. To hit straight to goal seldom succeeds when the ball is dead, but if the team spread out, the two Forwards going to goal and facing the ball, they can prevent the Back getting it and may often score from the pass. (Example XIX.)

The two Forwards by facing the striker are able to block the ball, if going wide of goal, and will then have no difficulty in putting it through. It is evident that in this way the assistance of these Forwards can be made use of, whereas if facing the goal they can do no good and do not derive the least advantage from the last sentence of the penalty. "The side fouled are free to place themselves where they choose."

The penalty of hitting out between the goal posts, with the remaining players behind the line, is not a severe penalty, but many teams make it so by driving the ball into the hands of their adversaries. The only possible result is to have the ball returned with or without a score. The only safe way of hitting out is to tap the ball across the goal line to enable the Forwards to gallop out to the outside quarter, and then a drive will place the ball for one

EXAMPLE XVIII

Penalty 2. Y Back placing the Ball to his Number 2 or his Half Back.



Penalty 4 X 3 placing the Ball to either of his Forwards to make the Goal.

EXAMPLE XIX

of them to take it on. The danger of the opposite Forward getting the ball is very slight if the striker is cool. Of course the first tap must not send the ball more than 3 or 4 yards and the Forwards must clear away to the side indicated as fast as possible. As I mentioned before, if taken in an intelligent manner this penalty is not severe and should seldom be chosen instead of penalty No. 2.

Of all penalties, that of a free hit 50 yards from the centre of the goal is by far the most severe. It should only be allowed in the case of dangerous play or when crossing at a fast pace. Some umpires are much too liberal in awarding this penalty. They do not realize that there is no danger in crossing at a walk or even at a canter, and to stop the play is not only unfair but reduces polo to a ridiculous game. This penalty has done much for polo. It has reduced the danger of the old wild game to a minimum, but when penalties are awarded for fouls which are not fouls it disgusts both teams, who realize the umpire is doing more than his due share in winning the match.

Penalty No. 1 would appear an easy way of making a goal, but in practice it seldom succeeds. To make a straight shot from a dead ball is always difficult, and to dribble a stroke before the drive brings the opposite Forwards so close that a well aimed drive is not possible. Moreover, the dribble enables the opposite Backs to get into their places and meet the ball in succession.

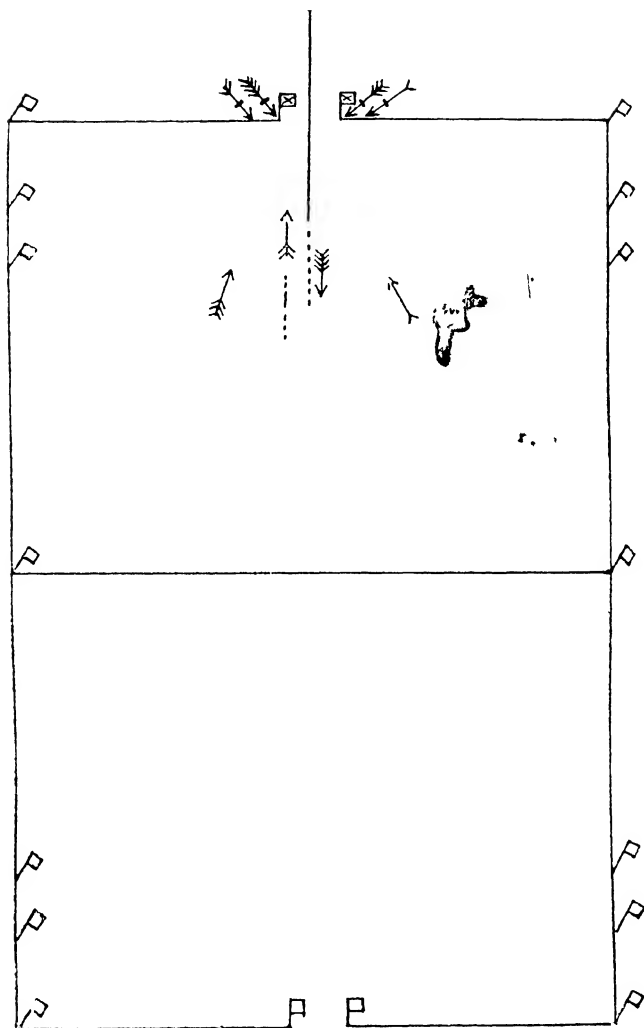
The following method I recommend, and which

I have found most successful, was given me by Mr. Hoare, I.C.S., a player who has made his mark as much by the study of the game as by his skill. In Example XX, the Back, who faces his own goal first hits a gentle back-hander towards the enemy's goal, and his best goal-getter being at a gallop when he hits, travels alongside of the ball, putting in a good drive when in his stride. This will usually lift the ball clear over the opponents, and being only some 30 yards from goal when he hits, the direction is, seldom wrong. Moreover, it is far easier to hit a moving ball straight than if it were a dead ball. Starting at a gallop, by the time the ball is first hit he has a flying start, and can cover the twenty yards or so before the opponent Forwards can get more than five yards from the goal line. If taken like this, a team should score nine times out of ten, whereas the average of goals obtained in the way so universally adopted cannot be more than 10 per cent.

Penalty No. 6 is not often seen, but if carried out should mean a certain goal. The player who meets the ball should take it on with short strokes, and not risk a drive. The fear of this penalty keeps players from unpunctuality and for this reason it is as well to retain it. Fortunately it is not often required, as no team cares to win a match in this way. On the other hand, to score from penalties given for fouls, offside, or any breach of the rules, is part of the game, the intention being not only to ensure adherence to the rules and stop

EXAMPLE XX

*Penalty 1 Y Back starting the Ball for
Number 2 who is passing at a gallop.*



dangerous play, but to give the side fouled the opportunity which was lost owing to unfair play on the part of the side causing the foul.

That an advantage is so seldom obtained is no doubt due in a measure to want of nerve on the part of the striker, but it will be evident, after reading this chapter, that a far higher percentage of goals could be obtained were more care given to the way the penalty is exacted.

CHAPTER XX

TRAINING FOR TOURNAMENTS

To first-class polo players, the tournament, being the test of skill, is the goal to which all preparation aims. To gain success there are special points deserving mention connected with the training and arrangements for tournaments, which, if overlooked, may be the cause of disappointment.

Of these considerations, the most important is the time allowed for preparation. To decide a few weeks before to compete in a first-class tournament seldom ends in victory, and I am certain that the programme for the season should be carefully mapped out before the season begins. My first lesson in tournament polo, and one I have ever since been grateful for, was taught me in 1888, when, after being beaten in the Bombay Tournament, the Captain of the team, of which I was fifth man, called his players together to discuss the arrangements for the tournament to take place a year later. This is a wise system, and I can recommend it the more strongly because I have seen so many failures for want of time for preparation. In a well-organized club, with many players and no difficulty as to ponies,

so long a time may not be necessary, but in the most favourable circumstances six months should be allowed. In other words, for a team to do its best in February or March, the players should be selected in October, and though at this time two waiting men should be chosen as alternative players, the team should not admit others who may consider themselves entitled to a place owing to superior individual play. There are exceptions to this rule of course, but it must be evident that the team accustomed to play together will do better in public than even better players who do not understand each other's game. Moreover, players cannot be expected to mount themselves to the utmost limit of their banking account if they feel that, at any moment, they may be replaced in the team by others because of their better ponies.

The selection of a team is a very real difficulty, and in many clubs grave mistakes are made and much heart-burning is the result. I have known more than one team formed without the assistance of the best player in the club, on the ground that he had lost his former dash, whereas in reality, being a player of experience, he only wanted the excitement of a tournament to make him show his true form. It is natural, and only right, that a community should choose their representatives, but is as fatal for them to make up the team as it would be for the electors of a country to form the cabinet. I recommend, therefore, that at the beginning of a season the three best players should be chosen at

a general meeting, and of these, one should be appointed Captain. These three representatives should then be empowered to select three more, and the team should be formed from the six chosen players, after due trial, by the three representatives.

By adopting this system, every one should be satisfied, and the six chosen men will know that the success of the team will depend on their own personal exertions, self-denial and mutual assistance. Their ponies will be recognized as all belonging to the team, irrespective of the four ultimately chosen to play, and the two extra players will be useful in making up matches in a station where there is only one first-class team.

Only secondary in importance to the selection of players is that of ponies. There are some men who can play on first season ponies. These are exceptional riders, and even these would be thirty per cent. more dangerous if mounted on tournament ponies. In second-class tournaments, good players on young ponies may succeed, provided each player has a couple of old ponies to fall back on. In first class polo, at least sixteen trained ponies are necessary, and these should be available at the commencement of the training of the team. If my readers will look back to past matches, they will surely agree that when it comes to a close contest, old ponies, even if not too sound, are invaluable, and young ponies, however good in a station game, cannot be depended on.

The question of ponies must always be a difficult

one and cause the Captain of a team much anxiety. If all his players are prepared to train their own animals, and are such good horsemen that they can be relied upon to make them perfect, the mounting of a team is enormously simplified. If this is not possible, it becomes a question of money. At the same time, even a first-class team can be mounted economically on tournament ponies if the purchase of ponies is carried out in a business-like way. If the team is situated in Madras or Bombay, the time to buy is certainly after the meetings in Madras and Poona; but for those in the north, there is no time like March after the Inter-Regimental. The price of tournament ponies is then at its lowest owing to owners going on leave, etc. At this time there are very few ponies that cannot be bought for Rs. 1500, which is a fair price for a first-class pony that has gone through a season and has kept workably sound. Any little defects in soundness should of course necessitate a reduction in price, and after a few months' rest during the summer these ponies should come up in September or October in the best condition.

The advantage of buying after a tournament lies in the purchaser knowing what he is getting, and the certainty of having tournament ponies at the beginning of the season. To buy during the season is seldom satisfactory. The price is naturally at its highest, and the best ponies require some months of steady play before a new owner can get the best value from them.

If teams cannot afford to mount themselves on tournament ponies, they should buy in December or January in Bombay or Calcutta for the following season. If well selected and carefully trained, such ponies should be fit for second-class tournaments in November, and perhaps 30 per cent. may be ready for first-class matches in February or March. Teams which are prepared to train a new consignment every year will find polo a very economical amusement, provided they select ponies of the right stamp, and confine themselves to second-class tournaments. There is always a demand for trained ponies in December and January, and the difference between raw and trained polo ponies more than covers their expenses for the year, even after allowing a percentage for failures.

Besides the players and ponies, the training for tournaments requires much hard work. Players have to be brought on to fill certain places in the team, and ponies must be put by or finished as described in Chapters III and XXII. Stable management must receive careful attention, and the ponies must be watched every week to see if any are showing signs of weakness which may disqualify them for continuous fast work.

In India it is certain that ponies will have to be railed to tournaments except when competing in the tournament held locally. To bring a team of ponies a long distance by train and keep them in good condition is an art. If care and supervision is given to this, ponies should not suffer, but if boxed

and left to syces the result may be disastrous. If poor and stale when boxed, they will be useless after a long journey. On the other hand, if above themselves, they often come out of the train very fat inside, and this is almost as bad a fault if there is no time to reduce them. The great danger in a long journey is fever. This is not due to fatigue, but to over-feeding. Ponies if allowed to stand in a stall for four or five days on full feeds of corn and no work are most liable to liver, and many race horses are lost annually from this cause alone. In a horse-box, where they cannot move, it is the more necessary to reduce the corn and give half bran and half oats. Six to eight pounds a day is ample, but the grass should be unlimited. Frequent water is an essential during a railway journey, and ponies must be warmly rugged at night.

Ponies should never enter a box after a hard day's polo. It is always as well to allow a good night's rest after polo, but I prefer 24 hours to elapse from the time they last played to the time they are boxed. After reaching their destination, ponies again want some rest before being called on to play. It is a good rule to allow the same interval after leaving the train as was occupied in the journey, before playing in a match. Thus two days in the train would require two days' rest, and so on. If the journey occupies more than three days, ponies should break their journey, being unboxed and picketed for 12 hours. Thus a long journey from Bangalore to Meerut of seven days in the train

would require at least two halts of twelve hours each, if the ponies are expected to arrive in fit condition. Ponies going north soon recover tone after a weary journey. The bracing air and the good grass chiefly account for this. Ponies going south take longer to recover partly owing to the want of green grass. A supply of grass should therefore be ready for them on arrival until they get accustomed to the hay, which forms the staple food there.

As soon as the ponies are fit for fast work, a team cannot put in too much practice on the tournament grounds. The pace of polo grounds varies very much. To practice at Umballa or Meerut does not help much to win at Calcutta or Poona, and vice versa. The polo week is usually held at the same time as the race week, and teams are usually content with a couple of practice games before the tournament and prefer to spend the alternate days at the races. I have seen so many tournaments lost like this for want of practice. If teams are not prepared to practice on race afternoons, they should meet for two hours in the mornings, but every day should include at least twenty minutes' work on each pony. This is necessary to keep the pony clear in the wind, and to give the player the harmony between hand and eye on a strange ground.

Practice should be fast, if ponies will stand fast work, with new balls and flags up. If this practice can be put in during the afternoon, it is of course an advantage, as the light varies so much in India.

It is no unusual thing to find players contending they are the better without practice. Some players certainly want more practice than others, but all require more than they like. I have seen many tournaments lost for want of it, and not a few won by sheer hard work and constant practice.

When teams are fairly equal, the winner will always be found in that which has given most attention to the training for tournaments, and which by much practice and self-denial, has made every player and every pony ready for the contest.

CHAPTER XXI

TREATMENT OF A STABLE IN HOT WEATHER

ALTHOUGH polo is carried on throughout the summer as well as during the winter in India, owners of tournament ponies will find it an economy to throw up their valuable ponies for at least three months every year. In England, ponies remain at the top of their form for nine or ten years, whereas in India four or five seasons is a liberal estimate. I am certain the reason ponies in England come out year after year is to be found in the system of turning polo ponies out to grass from September or October until February or March. Not only do their feet and legs get entire rest, but their internal organs, being relieved of all strain, return to their normal conditions.

In India, the possibilities of turning ponies out to grass are very few. Paddocks are not available, grass is scarce, and to allow valuable ponies to roam over grass *rumnahs* * is much too risky. We must therefore consider a system suitable to India, whereby polo ponies may obtain the same relaxation, for a period from three to six months, as if

* Land reserved for hay.

they were turned out. The system I recommend is after all only a makeshift, for nothing can take the place of nature, and turning ponies out is only sending them back, from artificial feeding and work, to rest in a state of nature.

Ponies which have had a hard season, if rested for six months, will come up in the autumn as fresh as possible, and even aged ponies, 15 years old and more, will work with the same dash as young ones, provided their legs are not too unsound. In March or April, therefore, tournament ponies had better be put by until September or October. If wanted for Simla or Poona, three months will have to suffice, but unless an annual rest of at least three months is allowed, ponies cannot be expected to last and retain their youth and dash. When I left India in 1898, my best pony was 17 years old, but was so fresh that she still played like a young pony. After taking her home to England, she continued to play for two seasons before being pensioned off. This I attribute entirely to the annual rest she received after each season.

Though I am not in favour of the firing iron and the blistering pot, this is certainly the most favourable time to apply artificial aid to nature, and any pony showing tenderness in the feet or ligaments should now be treated. Shoes should be removed, and exercise limited to walking in hand. An hour in the morning and an hour in the evening is sufficient. Horses at grass require no grooming ; but in a stable, nature must be assisted, and every

pony must receive the usual dressing down twice a day. Every item of stable management must receive the same attention as when the ponies are at work, but the feeding must be entirely altered.

I recommend the following scale :—

Bran	8 lbs.
Grass	40 „
Lucerne	10 „

If ponies are poor in condition, 2 lbs. boiled barley may be added until they have recovered tone and condition. If unhealthy, the advice of a veterinary surgeon should be obtained at once, for the efficacy of the hot weather treatment depends on the pony being in perfect health. I am not in favour of physic, as better results can usually be obtained by dieting, but of course there are cases which, from continued neglect, require strong measures. Such should be treated only by a qualified man, as there are very few amateurs who can be trusted with the use of physic. At the same time, the employment of the alterative recommended in Chapter III is not only quite safe but also most effective. A tablespoonful of the mixture, equal parts of sulphur, resin and nitre, in the night feed for a week is therefore recommended as soon as ponies are thrown out of work. I have known some qualified men smile at the idea of this doing any good, but as I was given the receipe in 1891 by the cleverest veterinary surgeon I ever met, who was also a most successful trainer,

and having proved its value for twenty years, I can safely and most strongly recommend it.

Some ponies will get so above themselves, even on this low diet, as to be a danger to themselves. A reduction of the bran to 3 or 4 lbs., and an equivalent increase in grass is all that is required to put this right. There are some animals which do splendidly on grass alone, and these are just the ponies which are so difficult to manage when getting no work.

If well covered in fat, there is no objection to giving grass alone, but they must be watched to see that they do not lose tone or condition. Ponies getting no bran require 50 lbs. of grass in addition to 10 lbs. of lucerne, or 60 lbs. of green grass if lucerne is not procurable.

In India bran contains more nutriment than in England, and ponies out of work seldom require corn unless inclined to lose muscle.

When green grass is not procurable, hay must take its place, but a larger allowance of lucerne is wanted, and both should be mixed together and reduced to chaff. Chaff-cutters are not considered a necessity in India as in England, but, if hay is the only forage, the chaff-cutter is just as necessary out here as at home, and is a great economy. To throw hay on the ground, as is the custom in India, is not only wasteful but bad stable management. Clean feeding is the first essential to produce clean coats, and a clean coat is only the outward sign of health.

During the hot weather, the stall of the stable requires constant supervision. The stable refuse must be removed more frequently, and the floors and walls periodically washed with a disinfectant. Flies cannot be entirely prevented, but these precautions assist materially. Chicks lined with blue keep out flies and maintain the stables dark and cool.

I prefer light cotton sheets to the nets, which are so popular in India. The sheets last longer, and keep off the flies better. The extra warmth is no disadvantage as horses do not sweat under a sheet.

At night, ponies should be picketed out. Stables retain the heat so much that they are uncomfortable for ponies whenever the bungalow is too oppressive for the owner. When marking out the night lines, 8 feet frontage should be allowed for every pony, and a mud wall two and a half feet high should be built up between each animal. This not only prevents ponies kicking each other, but ensures their rest being undisturbed by others which are restive. It must be remembered that ponies out of work are most mischievous, and delight in a sly kick at their companions, not from vice, but just for amusement.

There are many ways of picketing animals. The most common and certainly the worst way is a single head rope. If the slightest degree too long, a pony is certain to get the rope round the fore or hind foot, and a rope gall is the result. A rope gall takes a month to heal, and makes a

permanent blemish. A second and better way is to hobble ponies by a short rope and shackle round a foreleg. This is the way most generally adopted in India for picketing troop horses, and is the way I recommend for field service. It leaves the head free and prevents rope galls. At first, when secured by a foot rope, nervous horses are afraid to lie down, and if so, this method is not suitable. The third and best way is to secure the pony by two head ropes, meeting at an angle of 90 degrees when joined to the head collar. Taking the vertical height of a pony's head at $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet, and a horse's at 4 feet, the distance apart of the two pegs to which the ropes are tied should be 7 and 8 feet respectively. In other words, the pickets should be as close to the sides of the walls as possible.

I consider these details necessary because syces are most careless about this, and kicks or rope galls are the certain results of want of supervision. The third method is that recommended for polo ponies and officers' chargers in the field, but if rope is not available, the fore shackle is far preferable to the single head rope. During the hot weather, sand may be used instead of bedding. It is cooler and more economical. On the other hand, I am inclined to think it is more irritable to the skin, and I therefore prefer straw. The reduction in corn during this period of rest is a substantial decrease in the forage bill, so any little increase for grass, lucerne, or bedding must be cheerfully met.

To bring ponies back to work after their rest has

been fully dealt with in Chapter III, but I must caution my readers that to disregard the instructions there, and to gallop ponies when fat and without due preparation is to make certain of laming them or damaging their wind. Bad horse-masters often express surprise that horses go lame in the first hunt after a frost, and ponies in the first match of the season. That they do so is only natural, for horses are not machines, but, like human beings, are composed of very delicate structures, which, if strengthened by gradual work and careful training, can be made to perform wonderful things; but which without this strengthening process, are just as incapable of carrying a man at a gallop without breaking down, as a man of sedentary habits would be of running a mile in five minutes. Two months, therefore, must be allowed after rest to bring ponies back to tournament form. The first month of this may consist of walking exercise only, syces riding in saddles. To allow syces to ride bareback is a certain way to cause sore backs, as the tail bone of a native pressing on the backbone of a horse soon produces inflammation. As soon as exercise begins, feeds must be increased gradually to half oats and half bran. During the second month, slow polo and schooling, combined with increased corn will bring on a pony, and give him the wind and muscles necessary for fast work.

This is the time to re-make a pony's mouth unless perfect during the previous season. Careful schooling until a pony will gallop in the open with a

loose head, is the royal road to improving a pony's mouth, and though horsemanship is an important factor, much can be done by intelligent training.

Having given in detail the system I recommend for resting ponies during the summer months, I will now deal with the treatment of ponies kept up for games. The hot weather is the best time for training young players and young ponies, and of course every pony cannot be let down, nor is it necessary. Good players can get their amusement off half-trained ponies, and employ their time profitably in teaching young players. The ponies will not suffer from heat if treated properly. Feeds will have to be slightly reduced, more bran and boiled barley being given, and very fast work discouraged. There is a vast difference between the pace of a match and that of a good station game. So there is between that of a good station game of good players, and one in which half the players are beginners. In the heat, therefore, fast games are not to be encouraged, but the ordinary station polo will do the ponies no harm, and will keep the players in the best of health. On the ground, water is a necessity both for players and ponies. Players will find a sponge over the head of cool water a wonderful reviver, and ponies will be the better for the same treatment. After every chukka the water should be used freely over the head, back and loins, and then if the pony is quickly dried, saddled, and a cotton sheet put on, there is no fear of cold or fever, and the pony will not suffer

from distress and heat. Shade near a polo ground is a great comfort to ponies. This is not always possible, but it is better to send a pony a few hundred yards to shade while being washed and dried, after which he may return in time for the second game.

If treated according to the above recommendations, ponies during the hot weather may be kept up for play, but the principle should be recognized that to remain a first-class pony, at least three months' rest is required, and if he can be let down for six months so much the better.

CHAPTER XXII

REGIMENTAL POLO CLUBS

THERE has always been a difference of opinion regarding the best conditions of a polo club in a regiment or society, and the advisability of such institutions has even been questioned.

Much depends on the rules adopted, for I admit I have seen polo clubs which are little more than a heavy tax on every member of a regiment to enable a few to play polo. On the other hand, I am confident that it is impossible for a regiment to compete with success in a first-class tournament unless assisted by a polo fund, or unless four players can be found with sufficient means to bring 24 first-class tournament ponies into the field.

That it is possible to devise a system to meet all requirements, and which is not unfair to non-playing members, has been proved by several regiments. I go even further and believe that nearly every successful team owes much to a well-organized club, which, in addition to being a great help to beginners and to those who otherwise would be unable to play good polo, provides a portion of the match ponies. Formerly, the most common system adopted by

Regimental Polo Clubs was a fund raised entirely by subscriptions and a heavy entrance fee from every member. This fund was spent entirely in paying the entrance fees of tournaments, and the travelling expenses of the team. I think these the worst possible conditions. It is really no more than a tax on a community for the benefit of a few, and in spite of my sympathy with polo and polo clubs, I consider the general officer who abolished all polo funds in his command some years ago, on this account, was perfectly justified.

Putting aside the above conditions, which I hope no longer exist in these days, I want to consider the object of polo clubs and the best rules to suit various corps.

In my opinion, the most worthy object of a club is to encourage the game of polo, to enable those members who could not otherwise afford it to play good polo, to assist beginners in selecting ponies and to teach them the game. Lastly, to enable the representative team to compete in tournaments under the most favourable conditions. To fulfil all these conditions without taxing non-playing members would appear at first sight impossible. I hope to prove that this can be done, provided the rules are framed to suit the means of the regiment as well as to protect the interests of the club. Of course, it may be necessary to frame different rules in the case of a regiment in which the members can afford their own ponies without assistance, and in one where the main object of a club is to provide

ponies. Again, a club to compete in first-class tournaments could not be worked on the same system as one which is content to play in second-class competitions. I should here explain that I do not look upon the Infantry Tournament as first-class, in spite of being included under this heading by the I. P. A. Committee, in the rule for the regulation of tournaments.

The most common system at the present time appears to be a fund from which money can be borrowed by members of the club, to the extent of half the cost of a pony. This sum has to be paid back by instalments within a certain time. This system appears to work well in some regiments, but has disadvantages. Members are not protected from buying unsuitable ponies, and it does not do anything towards mounting the team.

A second system, and I think a better, is for the club to buy the ponies and loan them to members, calling on them when required for the team.

The third system is for a club to buy suitable ponies and to sell them to members at a small profit, retaining just enough for the requirements of the team.

In each case, a fund will be required before the club can be of any assistance, and regiments wishing to institute a polo club, must first consider how this fund is to be raised. If ambitious and anxious to compete in the Inter-Regimental and I. P. A. Championship, Rs. 9000 or £600 will be required; but if content with station polo and second-class

contests, much less will suffice. I think Rs. 5000 should be ample, and if borrowed at 4 per cent. would mean an annual interest of Rs. 200, a sum which would not be considered a serious tax even on a small community such as a regiment of Infantry or Indian Cavalry.

The next consideration is what rules to adopt as best suited to the members of the club. By far the largest proportion of polo clubs are those in which the members are not well off: such being the case, it is as well not to be too ambitious, and to remember that second-class polo is possible on a small income, whereas it costs twice as much to play in first-class tournaments. In the years 1892 to 1895, the polo club of the regiment to which I then had the honour to belong played only in second-class tournaments, and the funds increased annually some Rs. 3000. This increase was due to buying cheap untrained ponies, and offering them for sale when fully trained after the Infantry Tournament. The three following seasons, the club competed in every possible first-class tournament, with the result that the funds of the club decreased Rs. 3000 annually. This proved to me that it is only first-class polo which is so expensive. The best ponies must be retained, and only those which are not good enough can be sold, to be replaced by better at the time of the year when ponies are not at a premium.

The next point to be considered is whether the members are prepared to train their own ponies,

and include one or more good judges of a horse. If so, I strongly recommend that the club should be the owner of all ponies bought, and not only a banker. Of course, players prefer to own their ponies; but if they cannot afford good ponies, they had better be content with club ponies and play good polo, rather than own bad ponies and play bad polo.

If the committee is not prepared to work for the good of the club, or is incapable of selecting raw ponies and making them, the loan system is the only alternative.

In regiments where every officer plays polo and can afford to mount himself, the committee can assist young players enormously by buying good ponies when available at moderate prices, and selling them to players at a small profit. This system has been adopted with success in one regimental club, where ponies can be bought by junior officers at cost price, and by others at a 10 per cent. profit, or if over Rs. 1000, for an extra Rs. 100. The profit made by the club is sufficient for current expenses, cost of railing ponies to tournaments, etc., and no subscriptions whatever have ever been demanded from members. The greatest advantage of a club owning ponies lies in the facility of mounting the team without calling on other members to lend their own ponies. It is most objectionable to see another man playing one's favourites, especially if he is not as considerate as he should be. It is equally objectionable as one

of the team to be obliged to play on another man's pony, with the constant fear of something going wrong.

I am often asked to suggest rules for Regimental Polo Clubs, and I therefore propose to give in detail the rules I consider most suitable. Every club must decide for itself the variations suitable to its own case, but it must be recognized that the purchase of untrained ponies is the only way to make any substantial profit. If well chosen, ponies when trained, and if sound, should realize double the initial cost. If the ponies are such that this profit is not evident, the ponies should not be bought. Thus ponies costing Rs. 600 should bring in Rs. 1200 after a year, and those of Rs. 750 or Rs. 800 should realize Rs. 1500. After deducting expenses, the average profit should be about Rs. 300 per pony. If 10 raw ponies are bought annually, a profit of Rs. 2500 to Rs. 3000 is not too much to expect. It is true that dealers in India have increased their prices during the last few years, and ponies formerly costing Rs. 500 cannot be bought for less than Rs. 750. At the same time the price of trained ponies has not altered. If anything it has decreased. The profits, which formerly were added to polo clubs working on these lines, now go partly to the dealers. It is, of course, a question of supply and demand, but polo players are much to blame for buying at the dealers' prices without discrimination. When trained ponies can be bought for Rs. 1200, it is folly to give Rs. 900 for untrained,

as such will cost more than the former price before they can be considered trained ponies.

The success of a polo club must necessarily depend much on the Committee, who, if good organizers as well as good men of business, will be able to place the funds on a sound financial basis, without which no club can stand for long. Another requisite must not be overlooked. The co-operation and support of all the members for the general welfare of the club and the assistance of young players is the first essential to its working harmoniously. A club in which a proportion of the members are dissatisfied with the rules or with the advantages they derive personally is doomed to collapse. I have seen several polo clubs cease to exist on this account. The advantages of the club being confined to a few members, usually the best players, and the others being dissatisfied, the Commanding Officer has found it advisable in the interests of the regiment to abolish the institution. The results are invariably unfortunate from a polo point of view. The regiment, with the exception of two or three men, cease to play polo and take up other amusements. In India, I consider polo the best form of sport for young officers. It is engrossing, it is always at the door all the year round, it keeps officers present with their regiments except perhaps for 10 days' leave once or twice a year, and keeps them out of mischief. I have seen many youngsters, ruined by racing, or rather betting at races, and many from other causes even

less respectable, but I have never known a single officer forced to leave his regiment from the expense of polo. I trust that regiments coming to India will realize this, and instead of complaining of the expense of ponies, will endeavour to organize a polo club to assist young players and to encourage the game.

SUGGESTED RULES FOR REGIMENTAL POLO CLUBS

1. The Club shall be a Voluntary Regimental Club with the object of encouraging the game of polo, to assist young players, and to enable the team to compete in tournaments.

2. A Committee of three members shall be appointed at a Mess Meeting, who will keep the accounts. The accounts shall be audited at the Quarterly Audit Board, and produced at all Mess Meetings. The Committee will be responsible for the management of all matters connected with the Club, but will submit matters of general interest for decision at Mess Meetings, including the Annual Programme for the season and the election of the team (*vide* Chapter XXI).

3. The Funds may only be spent in the purchase of ponies and their expenses, entries to tournaments and the railway fares of the ponies.

4. Ponies when purchased may be loaned to Members, who must be entirely responsible for their maintenance while in their hands. Such ponies may not be returned to the Club without a month's notice being given to the Committee. The

loss occasioned by accident, etc., will be borne by the Club, provided it is due to polo and not to unfair treatment.

5. Ponies may be purchased from the Club at the price decided by the Committee. If purchased on the following Club conditions, and if within three months of being entered on the Stock Book, the price shall not be more than a 10 per cent. profit to the Club on the cost price and expenses. After this, the price shall be that decided at the Quarterly Stock Valuation. No profit will be demanded from 2nd-Lieutenants on ponies purchased within three months of being entered in the Stock Book.

CLUB CONDITIONS

(a) No ponies shall be raced without the sanction of the Committee.

(b) Ponies shall not be sold to non-members without giving the Club the refusal at the price of any *bonâ fide* offer.

(c) Ponies can be claimed for the use of the Regimental Team a fortnight before two annual tournaments (decided by Mess Meeting). During this time, their expenses will be paid by the Club, which will be responsible for all damage, to the extent of the amount received for the pony when sold by the Club.

In the above suggested rules no mention has been made of subscriptions or entrance fees. These

must be decided by every Club, but I do not think the monthly subscription should exceed Rs. 10 and Rs. 5 for non-players. Membership must be entirely voluntary, but if the subscription is small, the tax will be light. The Committee will naturally be tempted to make the mounting of the team the first consideration. To do so is false economy. To mount the youngest members is the best way of producing good players and the success of the team is assured sooner by this than by mounting the older players who seldom improve after 30 years of age.

We hear many complaints in these days of officers being dissatisfied with the advantages of the service, and sometimes its advantages may not be apparent. Such complaints are never heard from regiments which provide cheap sport for young officers. It is only when young men lead dull gray lives, having nothing to do in the afternoons, and no amusement to interest them or provide subjects of conversation, that they become dissatisfied. A well organized polo club, in which every young officer can play on three or more ponies, is the best possible training to make them keen officers, capable men, and imbue in them that love of the regiment which is our chief factor as a fighting force.

CHAPTER XXIII

VETERINARY NOTES—SPLINTS AND SPAVINS

ALTHOUGH I am no advocate for amateurs to usurp the duties of qualified veterinary surgeons, yet I think all polo players should have some knowledge of veterinary science, if only to be able to detect lameness and to form a correct estimate of the extent of an injury. Moreover, except in those stations which include mounted troops, the services of a qualified officer is not often available. Some of the native salutries are most excellent, but I would hesitate to accept the decision of the majority of this class, having so often found them at fault. I recommend every polo player, therefore, to acquire as much veterinary knowledge as possible, especially that branch of it dealing with examination for soundness, and the simple treatment of all lameness.

When it comes to physicking, I think the amateur is out of place. It requires more than a superficial knowledge to diagnose internal complaints correctly, and almost as much to cure them. Lameness is another matter, and though amateurs may not have studied anatomy, they should be able to detect lameness however slight and to deal with simple cases.

To detect lameness, I know of no better way than to trot a pony, when cool, along a metalled road, if possible slightly down hill. It is useless to do this, in difficult cases, when the pony has been warmed up by work, though lameness will be the more apparent if the pony has been at work and allowed to stand for half an hour in the stable till cool. Few good polo ponies, the morning after a match, will come out of a stable and trot away sound, and such is no fair test. Muscles are stiff and blows from the ball or stick have produced soreness. A football player usually feels stiff the morning after a match, but after a walk is quite fit to play the same afternoon. To test a pony's soundness, therefore, he should receive his morning's exercise, grooming and feed, and then be called upon to trot. Few natives understand how to trot out a pony for examination. If the reins are held tight, slight lameness is most difficult to detect. The reins therefore should be held in one hand only, and at the full length of the reins. If the pony plays up, a slight jog of the reins will soon bring him to his senses and make him trot. Then the hand holding the reins must be raised until the head is free from any weight whatever. When slowly trotting towards you, any tenderness in the forelegs is at once apparent; as the pony passes you any unevenness in the hock action can be noticed, and as he goes away lameness behind can be detected.

Having decided the leg in which the pony is

lame, not always an easy matter, the next point is to decide the spot, and, if possible, the cause. The actual place is usually visible, or noticeable to the touch owing to the inflammation. Some lameness defies all experience, and it is usual to put down such to the shoulder. I must mention that the shoulder so seldom causes lameness that to diagnose this as the seat of lameness is usually the sign of incompetence. With the exception of a few ponies with bruised shoulders from slipping upon a hard ground, I do not recall a single case of shoulder lameness in a polo pony, but I have known very many players who have told me their ponies had gone lame in the shoulder. Undetected lameness is usually to be found in the foot or fetlock, and attention should be directed to these parts rather than higher up.

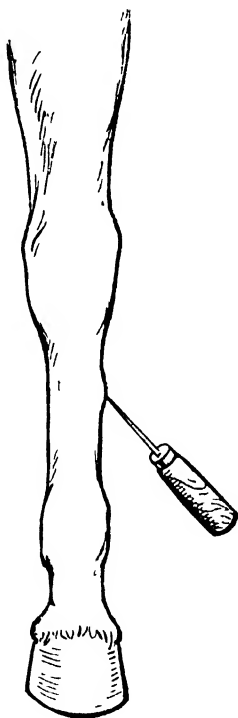
Every class of horse is inclined to show weakness in some particular place owing to the nature of the work. Harness horses go wrong chiefly in the feet and hunters in the hocks. Polo ponies, owing to the severity of the strain in stopping and turning, have no favourite weak spot, but of course the forelegs suffer most. The ailments most common to them are splints, spavins, ringbone, sprain of the ligaments, tendons and fetlock, inflammation of the sesamoids and over-reach.

In young ponies, splints are more common than anything. They cause acute lameness, and a pony may be thrown out of work for months for a simple splint which, if treated scientifically, should not

require more than a fortnight to cure permanently. There are dozens of quack remedies for splints, partaking of the nature of a blister. All take time and few are efficacious because they do not remove the cause. Without going too deeply into anatomy, I want to make it quite clear what a splint is. Owing to concussion, slight inflammation of the bone takes place which results in a collection of serum beneath the covering of the bone, called the periosteum. At first, this is liquid and is not unlike a blister. The pain is caused by the pressure of this exudation against a hard substance. After some time, the serum solidifies and becomes bone, and the periosteum is stretched over it. Blisters, etc., quicken this process, but do not prevent a recurrence of the lameness. On the other hand, if a new splint be pricked, the pressure is relieved, the serum exudes, the periosteum lies flat on the bone and the splint vanishes, seldom, if ever, to return. I can never understand the objection on the part of some veterinary surgeons to this process. There is little pain in the operation. Sometimes I do not even pick up a foreleg, and have never had to do more than have one leg held up by a syce when performing it. It was first shown me in 1890, since when I must have cured many scores of splints. I cannot recall a single failure, nor do I remember one case which was not permanently cured. My instruments have never been any but improvised, nor do I recommend any elaborate budding iron for this.

Having prepared four iron spikes in wooden handles about five inches long, tapering to a blunt point, the size of a No. 6 shot, the only other requisite is a brazier of charcoal. The pony is then brought close to the brazier with the sound leg nearest to it. One syce holds the pony, one lifts up the sound leg, and a third fans the charcoal and hands the irons when hot. The only difficult point is to find the exact spot to prick the splint. In the illustration a large splint is shown inside the off fore, and the point of the iron shows how it should be pricked, at the bottom of the splint and upwards, to allow the serum to escape.

A small piece of wood to act as a lead for the iron is useful if the hand is not steady, and is advisable in all cases. Placing this lead against the leg, below the splint, with the left hand, the first iron is used to brown the hair only, and the operator must then satisfy himself that it is in the exact spot. The second red-hot iron just gets through the skin, the third down to the periosteum, and the fourth goes through. This is usually evident to



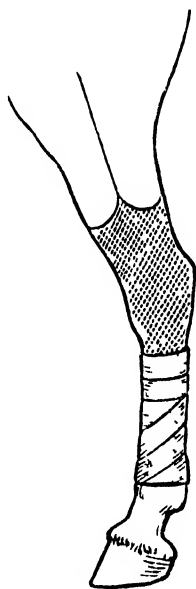
the hand as it feels like pricking a rubber sack. In addition to the feel, the hot iron meeting the liquid serum will fizz, and on withdrawing it, small globules of the oily liquid will be seen adhering to the iron. The operation is now over. The only pain felt is when the splint is punctured, and the pony will forcibly drop the sound leg and lift the injured one.

The only treatment now required is to keep the puncture open with a little vaseline and cotton wool, and over that a cold bandage for a few days until the little wound has closed up. After a day, the lameness will have materially decreased, but I do not recommend the pony be trotted for a week, as this might produce inflammation, though I cannot say I have known it do so. I recommend no work for ten days, by which time the skin will have closed. Walking exercise for another week should bring the pony sound and fit for work again. I cannot recall any pony which took more than a fortnight to cure, but I have worked them in far less time. In 1896, returning to Poona from home, I found five Club ponies lame from splints. These were wanted a week later to play in the Bombay Tournament. I pricked them all and played them on perhaps the hardest ground in India without one being the worse for it. Since then, I have never treated a splint in any other way, and consider it the most humane, scientific, and effective method. Players should do this operation themselves. If left to a farrier, he will probably use a budding iron, and if serious damage is not done, a permanent

eyesore will be left. The scar of a puncture is not larger than the head of a wax match, and is entirely covered by the hair. Moreover, if performed before the splint hardens, the enlargement entirely disappears. Care must be taken not to prick the ligament if the splint is very far back, but with this exception, there is not much danger of damaging any of the other tissues.

SPAVIN

A bony enlargement inside the hock is called a spavin. Sometimes this causes no lameness and may be disregarded. More often, the spavin gets inflamed with work and produces lameness. Moreover, the spavin increases in size until two or more of the small bones of the hock are so fixed that the hock cannot be properly flexed, and the toe of the hoof gets worn from the foot dragging on the ground. I regret to say this is a very common injury in polo ponies, especially when the hocks are weak or very straight. The treatment usually recommended is firing or blistering. Having never applied this treatment, I am not prepared to recommend it or otherwise. The only treatment I have ever used



is heat. The hock is most difficult to bandage, and anything in the way of a poultice or hot water can only be applied effectively by using an old woollen sock. The toes having been cut off, the sock can be drawn over the leg until the heel is over the point of the hock. This point in the anatomy of the horse represents the heel of a man. A bandage can then be put on the hind leg, and a poultice inserted inside the sock. This poultice may be required at times for kicks and injuries from a polo stick, so I mention it here, but the best way to apply heat to a spavin is as follows :—

Roast a couple of red bricks, and alternately apply the hot brick, wrapped in a piece of old blanket, to the spavin. The heat of the brick remains for about half-an-hour, and the result is to reduce the inflammation considerably. I do not pretend that this treatment will send a spavin away, but it will enable a pony with spavin to carry on through a season without getting worse, and if applied before and after polo will relieve the pain and inflammation. At the end of the season the question as to firing or blistering must be decided by a veterinary surgeon.

CHAPTER XXIV

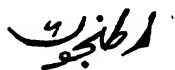
VETERINARY NOTES—RINGBONE AND OVER-REACH

PONIES with upright pasterns may be expected to suffer more from concussion than those with sloping pasterns. At the same time, all polo ponies are liable to ringbone owing to the severe strain on the joints and ligaments. Ringbone may be a bony growth round the upper joint of the pastern, and is then not serious. Lower ringbone is when the growth is below the coronet, connecting the lower pastern bone to the pedal or coffin bone, producing considerable lameness. Even when the inflammation has worn off, the action loses its freedom, and becomes stilty owing to the joint being unable to work freely. Ringbone does not appear suddenly like a splint or bad sprain of the tendon, but from constant work, a gradual growth takes place producing but little lameness at first, which, however, increases if not checked. Most old polo ponies have some thickening round the coronet, either from a growth round the pastern or from ossification of the lateral cartilage. Ponies with this defect are not sound, but may be considered practically sound for polo according to the extent of the

thickening, and to the amount it is affected by fast work. A first-class pony should not be condemned on account of a ringbone if it does not affect his play, but of course any unsoundness will affect the price.

An inflamed foot may be the result of a twist or a blow, in which case the lameness will be acute, and rest and a blister is the only way to save the pony from permanent blemish. The majority of cases result from concussion, producing but slight lameness which would not be noticed by syces, and not always by the owner. After several weeks' play, the inflammation produces a growth of bone, and one day the pony is noticeably lame. In all cases, of course, prevention is better than cure, and it is wise to have ponies trotted in hand every morning after polo, when even slight tenderness can be detected, and to a certain extent alleviated. For many years it has been my custom to have hot water on the polo ground, and as soon as a pony has finished for the day, bandages dipped in hot water are applied to the forelegs from the knee to the coronet, covered with a dry bandage to keep in the heat. After severe games, these may be renewed at night, but usually the bandages put on at the polo ground remain on till the following morning. I recommend this custom, and am certain it is one means of preventing inflammation. At the end of a season, the blister and a six months' rest is certainly the most certain cure for ossification round the pastern; but during the season, this is

only possible when the pony can be spared, or if the lameness is acute. It is quite possible in the majority of cases to keep a pony going without acute lameness. It is of course cruel to work any pony unless sound, but the cruelty is a question of degree, and of every hundred ponies, a very small percentage are free from some unsoundness. I am certain ponies do not suffer to anything the same extent that hockey and football players do. Men play rough games when so lame they can hardly walk until warmed up, whereas no pony is ever asked to play if he limps when trotting, or in other words, if suffering from acute lameness. The best application I know of to keep a pony working sound is a native medicine which I obtained after considerable difficulty from a very clever Pathan horse-dealer in 1890. Since then I have never been without it, and look upon it as a most useful accessory in a polo stable. Pathans call it Yaralung, but the Hindustani name is Rātānjōt



It is, I believe, the bark of the root of a tree, but what tree I have never discovered. It can be obtained in every bazaar, as it is used as a cattle medicine. It is antiseptic, and a strong astringent, and is easy to apply. I am told the Pathans use it freely among themselves to heal sword cuts received in tribal wars. I have given it to medical officers, and to a few veterinary officers, but have never been able to

establish any of that respect for it I hold myself. I give it now in detail because it is invaluable for polo ponies and quite safe in the hands of amateurs. Rătănjôt can be used in three ways. For flesh wounds, sweet oil should be brushed over the gaping wound with a feather, and the bark, reduced to powder, sprinkled over the oil. This is repeated daily. It relieves pain and prevents inflammation, and the wound heals from below very rapidly. Why it relieves pain I am unable to say. I know it is so, because I have tried it on myself as well as on many ponies. For tendons and ligaments, as well as bruises and abrasions, such as tread or overreach, the Rătănjôt must be reduced to powder, then grilled in sweet oil for 15 minutes, and applied as a poultice. For ossification of all kinds such as ringbone and even spavin, the stuff should be grilled in mustard oil (kharwa tel). It is then a severe irritant and unsuitable for cuts or even tendons, unless it is wanted to blister them. For the coronet, it is not too severe, and may first be rubbed in for 10 minutes and then applied as a poultice. If a new ringbone be treated like this for three days, the pony is usually sound enough for work, and if applied daily on return from polo, a pony can be kept sound throughout a season. I have known cases work sound with the help of this application for a few weeks, and have then discarded it, being no longer necessary.

When the pain has gone and only swelling remains, I recommend the following application

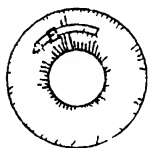
which I learnt from the same dealer. Taking two handful of the inside of an anthill, or if this is not procurable, an old mud brick from an old ruined hut, and reduce to powder. Add half as much rock salt, and heat up with water to a boil. The degree of water should be only enough to make it into the consistency of porridge. When hot, spread this an inch thick on a piece of old blanket or sacking and apply it to the injured part, which must first be wetted with hot salt and water. A couple of dry bandages to keep in the heat must be applied over the poultice. The heat of the inflamed part will be drawn out by the poultice, and the salt, which at first will produce some scurf from the skin, will shortly harden the tissues and reduce the swelling. I am unable to explain the reason of these cures further than this. I saw the results on several occasions before I began to practice them myself, but since then I have proved their value entirely to my own satisfaction. I have never made any secret of them, but have been diffident about saying much because I dislike having to refuse to treat other people's ponies. Moreover, I do not care to offend qualified veterinary surgeons by claiming a knowledge of a science which belongs to them. My treatment does not really clash with the recognized veterinary system of firing and blistering. If six months' rest is possible, I would certainly use the blister, but if unable to give so much rest, the treatment I recommend is invaluable, and enables many a pony to carry on for

a season which might otherwise have to be thrown up.

Though I did not mention the Rătănjôt under the heading of spavin, I think it is better to rub in this medicine before applying the hot brick. The Rătănjôt reduces the inflammation to an extraordinary extent, and of course pain is no more than the result of inflammation.

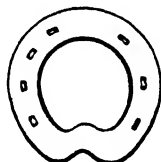
For over-reach, Rătănjôt in sweet oil is perfectly marvellous. Being antiseptic, the chief danger is eliminated. Having this medicine always in the stable, it can be applied at once before a wound gets any dirt in it, and before inflammation sets in.

Some ponies are always inclined to over-reach, and if so, they must be protected by a numnah pad buckled round the pastern. This will take the severity of the blow of the hind foot, and even if the heel is somewhat bruised, it will not be cut. Ponies liable to constant over-reach should have the toes of the hind feet as short as possible and the shoes rounded. Even then they may injure themselves, and if so, the over-reaching numnah pad is the only safe way in which they can be played.



Ponies with feet liable to concussion should always be shod with bar shoes in front. The advantage has never been satisfactorily explained, but the fact remains that a pony which is lame in an ordinary shoe will often trot quite sound in a bar shoe. The reason is supposed to lie in the

current of the concussion running round the iron circle of the bar shoe, instead of running up to the foot. I do not know enough of science to give an opinion, but I know from practice that bar shoes are most valuable in all cases of foot lameness and should invariably be adopted. I do not like leather between the shoes and the hoof. It must be most carefully applied, and even then I have not found it nearly as good as the bar shoe. It is not generally known that thick shoes give less concussion than thin. Such is, however, the case. It can be proved by any one who runs down a steep metalled road in thin or thick boots. In the former the concussion will run right up to the knee, but in thick boots no jar will be felt as the boots will absorb all the concussion. For all work on roads heavy shoes should be made, and this principle should be recognized on very hard grounds. Moreover, any tendency to sore feet should be treated at once, bar shoes being put on and the treatment I recommend above applied at once. If checked at the first, ponies will avoid that woodeny action known as the polo trot. They will then be far more valuable and will be saved the constant misery of sore feet.



The subject of shoeing for polo ponies is always important, in spite of their not working along roads in India. Except in the tournament season, most ponies do just as well without shoes on the

hind feet, but when it comes to playing matches on hard grounds the assistance of caulkins can hardly be dispensed with. Some years ago, I introduced a form of polo shoes which is now almost universally adopted in India, and I am confident they are a great help to ponies when pulling up or turning on hard grounds. These are similar to ordinary shoes, but have lands cut across close in front of the nail holes to give a double resistance against the ground. By driving in nails with protruding heads, ponies are practically roughed for polo in a few minutes. With hind shoes the danger of over-reach must be considered, so I prefer caulkins to these polo shoes.

Polo players would do well to learn the principles of shoeing from one of the standard veterinary works, so that they can superintend native salutries, when qualified farriers are not available.

Special shoes are sometimes required for polo ponies. Of these the bar shoe is the most important. I recommend its use whenever the feet are inclined to be tender, in case of corns, laminitis, ringbone or navicular.

Tips are excellent to open out contracted heels, and often save a pony from getting navicular. They must be carefully made so as to allow the heels and frog to come down to the ground, their object being to give more work to these structures, opening the heels by developing the frog.

Some ponies stumble so badly that they are dangerous to ride. Arabs are particularly liable

to this, without any defect in conformation. They wear out the toe of the foreshoes by the slovenly way they walk, and when new shoes are put on they trip in a way that threatens to bring them down. Such ponies should always have the toes rounded, and if this is not sufficient to prevent stumbling, they can be shod in bullock tips. These are shoes with the toes cut away which allows the toe of the hoof to wear down and so avoid the stones and uneven ground. With bullock tips a bad stumbler can be driven in harness in comparative safety, when in ordinary shoes he would be quite unsafe.



Ponies with splay feet are inclined to brush and although the rasping of the horn is to be deprecated, a good farrier can much improve the shape of a hoof by careful shoeing, gradually bringing it to a normal shape. On the other hand, to rasp the hoof to fit a badly-made shoe is to sow the seeds of disease which may soon produce lameness.

CHAPTER XXV

VETERINARY NOTES—TENDONS AND LIGAMENTS

THE treatment of sprains is more troublesome than any other kind of injury owing to the likelihood of a recurrence of lameness, the first time the pony is given fast work. The only safeguard I know is to avoid buying any animal whose conformation denotes constitutional weakness in front.

Well-shaped forelegs reduce the liability to sprains to a minimum, but even then accidents do occur. The probability of a cure depends on the severity of the strain, the age of the pony, its conformation, and the treatment adopted. Young ponies recover from a sprain much sooner than old, and a heavy shouldered pony with light or badly-shaped forelegs will always go wrong again. The cure to be permanent must take time, and six months should be allowed before the pony can be ridden. In bad cases there is no treatment so effective as the firing iron. In England a new system of firing appears to be most excellent. At the end of the season, ponies with bad forelegs are fired, and the legs at once smeared over with Stockholm tar. The ponies are then turned out to

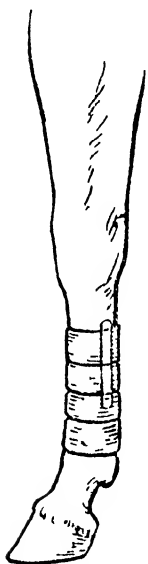
grass the same day. The cooling food, nature, and the powerful irritant of the firing works wonders, and when the tar peels off taking with it the old hair and skin, the new skin comes up on legs as clean as a foal's. I have never seen this tried on ponies in a stable, but I see no reason why it should not work just as well.

Though I believe most strongly in firing fore-legs which are badly sprained, I do not think this extreme measure should be adopted except as a last resource. Sometimes, if the sprain is not severe, a cotton wool pressure bandage will reduce the swelling and inflammation. There must be some art in applying this bandage, for I have never succeeded in doing any good with it myself. No doubt this is my own fault and I have made the bandage too loose or too tight. There is no doubt that pressure, if applied properly, is most useful, and the method of applying it which I have found most effective I will now give in detail. This method is the same for the suspensory ligament and the tendon, but the position will depend on that of the injury.

A piece of thin cotton cloth of the quality of puggri cloth, about two yards long and four or five inches wide, is dipped in water and rolled from both ends, making two tight rolls. About 24 inches of the cloth between the two rolls is then spread on a board and smeared over with the yolk of two fresh raw eggs. On this is sprinkled about half an ounce of powdered alum and a few grains of salt. The ends are then rolled together.

Having prepared three or four bandages of the same material about three inches wide and an inch thick, the double roll is applied to the injured tendon or ligament, which should have been well sweated in hot bandages.

The double roll is then most carefully applied to each side of the injury, opening out the roll to go round the back of the leg. It is then carefully bandaged with well-soaked rolls of the muslin cloth as tight as possible and without a crease. Four of these should be enough, with a stiff linen bandage to finish up with. The ends of the rolls are allowed to protrude on each side just below the knee, and three times a day these must be wetted. If they become hard and dry, the skin is apt to break and a bad sore is the result. The bandage is left on for three days, after which this treatment is again applied. After three applications, the result should be noticeable, but if the enlargement has not gone down, the treatment may be continued. During the time the pony is under treatment, he must get no corn. I recommend a dose of physic the first day of the treatment, and feeding reduced to grass only. The loss of condition due to so sudden a decrease in food will assist the healing process, and the condition will recover itself before the pony is fit for work.



Of course, the sooner a sprain is treated, the more amenable it is to this method, which depends chiefly on pressure assisted by a strong astringent. I presume the egg is required to soften the skin and open the pores. Much depends on the evenness of the bandage and the position of the rolls, and if applied properly, I have known old enlargements on the tendon entirely vanish. Failures must be expected, but I think this treatment more successful than blistering or firing unless the owner is prepared to put by the pony for at least six months.

When all swelling has gone down, the tissues require hardening. Though unable to explain the reason, I have found the salt and mud application the best for this, and after putting on this poultice for about a fortnight, the legs become quite clean and hard. I have often treated bad cases on which neither blisters nor firing have had any effect, and when sound, the ponies have even raced without going wrong. Racing is a far higher test of soundness than polo, and a pony that will stand training may be considered quite cured.

With ligaments, the same treatment is recommended, and success is more certain as it is so much easier to bandage a ligament than a tendon. If the ligaments of the fetlock are sprained, the rolls cannot be applied and the sprain must be treated in another way. Native horse-dealers have various ways for this, but the best I have seen is the leaf of the castor oil plant. Three of these leaves are soaked in vinegar during the night and raised to

boiling-point the next morning. They are then tightly bandaged round the fetlock and well soaked with the liquid. It is then allowed to dry on the pony, automatically tightening the bandage during the process.

I must now consider the treatment of sprains in detail. As soon as a sprain becomes evident, which unfortunately seldom occurs till the following morning, the leg must be well soaked in hot water in which poppy-heads have been boiled. Poppy-head (*afime ka patta*) can be procured in any bazaar, and containing a large amount of opium are excellent to deaden pain. Syces will not carry out this hot water treatment without supervision, and unless this early alleviation of the inflammation is well done, the further application may not be successful. The best way of applying heat is a deep canvas bucket coming up over the knee. The foot placed in this and the bucket supported by string round the neck, the bucket can be filled with warm water, hotter water being added from time to time until the temperature is so high that it will not allow the hand to be inserted. If this can be kept on for twelve hours followed by hot poultices of poppy-heads at night, the acute inflammation should be reduced after two days' treatment. Ten days' application of the rolled egg and alum and a fortnight of salt and mud is usually sufficient. This takes about a month and another to bring the pony back to work after being so long standing idle, means two months away from the

game. I do not mean that every sprain will take this time. The first time I saw it applied was on a racing pony which broke down in his trial. He was treated by a Pathan horse-dealer and won four races within a fortnight of the accident. It was this marvellous result that first drew my attention to the fact that there are cures unknown to the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, and that the native horse-dealers of India, who make their living by it, possess an art we would do well to acquire.

Eastern science is certainly more rapid in effecting cures for lameness than our own treatment ; and sometimes more effective.

CHAPTER XXVI

SOME FAMOUS PLAYERS OF THE PAST

LOOKING back twenty years, there can be no doubt that polo, as a scientific game, has made great strides. Players in these days play more as a combined team than formerly, and if brilliant individual play is not so noticeable as in those days, this is partly due to the fact that the defence has so much improved that play of such description is no longer possible. At the same time, I doubt if the players who used to stand out so brilliantly in olden days were better than the first-class players of to-day. Formerly individual play being the recognized means of winning matches, individual play was remarkably fine. Now, when accurate passing, or combined play, is the only chance of success, individual play is not so noticeable. Moreover, the passing game requires far more skill and accuracy than to make goals by fast and brilliant runs.

As I look back to the regimental teams of 1890, when the 17th Lancers left India, and compare them with 1905, when the same regiment returned after 15 years' absence, I have very little doubt

that teams which could then win the Inter-Regimental would have very little chance now, although the individual play was quite as good if not better. I regret I never saw the old team of that regiment play in a tournament, so cannot compare it with the best teams of that time. The best team after the 17th left India was the 7th Hussars, which won in 1891. Captain Carew, who played No. 3, was perhaps the best player in this difficult place I ever met. To onlookers he was by no means brilliant, but to his opponents he was a most difficult man to pass and his backhanders were all placed for his own side. In the same team Lieut.-Colonel Poore, then a subaltern, played Back. As a Back, I never met his equal in a regimental team. He seldom played polo, but when wanted for the team, he practised for a few weeks, and even then gave a marvellous exhibition of scientific play. Not being a regular polo player, he was not included in the team of the 7th Hussars for two years, but played for them again in 1895. On both occasions when Poore played Back for this team, they won, a fact that shows the value of a reliable Back who can drive a backhander right through the players and past the opposite Back. In the same team Captain, now General, Sir Douglas Haig used to play a very fine No. 2 game. Being a very fine horseman, he brought his ponies to a high state of perfection, and could take a ball down the ground with half strokes better than any Forward I have since come across.

At the time when the 7th Hussars held the first place among regimental teams, those of Jodhpore and Patiala were rivals for the championship among the Native State teams. It was not until 1897 that the Championship Tournament was instituted, so these teams never met in an open competition. They met in one match at Umballa in 1895, and though the Patiala team certainly won by a goal, the Jodhpore team appear to have had the best of the game, and had they met in a tournament there is no doubt in my own mind that they would have proved themselves to be the best team in India at that time. The Jodhpore team comprised the two finest players I ever played against, either in England or in India. Heerji Singh and Dhokal Singh may not have been so good individually as Heera Singh of Patiala, but in a team their knowledge of the game and the reliability with which they always played sound polo, placed them in front of even so renowned a performer as Heera Singh. Of the three, I would place Heerji Singh as the best player I have ever seen. He played No. 3, and could combine a rigid defence with the most brilliant attack possible. Being quite an extraordinary horseman, no player could get the advantage of him, and few could get on equal terms. Add to this, very powerful hitting, and an eye which seems to form part of the inheritance of these Rathore Rajputs, and the result can only be a magnificent polo player. Dhokal Singh, who is at the present time so well

known, was then second only to Heerji. His strokes as a Forward were as good as Heerji's as a Back, and his play equally good. At that time he was not as strong as Heerji Singh, and being a younger man had less experience. In the same team Sir Pertab Singh played No. 2, and though age had already begun to leave its mark, his perfect knowledge of the game and the unselfish nature of his play made up for comparative want of execution. It would be unfair when praising such a team to omit mention of Captain, now General, Sir Stuart Beatson, who not only trained this team, but also played for it in its earlier matches. I am sorry I never saw this officer play. That he was a very fine performer I know from hearsay, and that he was one of the originators of modern polo is evident from the public performances of the team he trained.

Colonel Heera Singh of Patiala, as he is generally known, was a player of another type. When first I knew him, he was a Duffadar in the 12th Bengal Cavalry and played Back for that fine team trained and captained by Captain, now Colonel, C. Gough. In 1892, the Maharajah of Patiala, himself a very fine hitter, took Heera Singh into his State army, and it is not unjust to say that the rise from Duffadar to Colonel was chiefly due to his skill as a polo player. Although Heera Singh was the finest and surest hitter I ever saw, his play was that of 20 years ago and was not modern polo. I look on him as the last as well as the best of those who won matches by individual play. His strokes

were marvellous and his horsemanship extraordinary. His faults were many, but he made up for them by skill. Though severe on his ponies, he could play on undersized grass-cutters tats against the most valuable ponies in India. He broke every recognized law of Back, but then he never missed. I have seen him dash into the game leaving the defence to take care of itself, and then rush back and save a goal by an extraordinary shot just as the ball was going through. He used to meet the ball on both sides, when quite unsupported, and played more for himself than for his side ; but then Heera Singh was so fine a player that he could not be bound down by any law. He won match after match off his own stick, and I am not prepared to condemn him because he played his own game. At the same time I could not place him in front of players such as Heerji and Dhokal Singh, who though perhaps not quite as brilliant were more useful in a team, and who developed rather than crushed the good play of other members of the side.

To return to regimental polo ; after the departure of the 7th Hussars, the regimental teams then playing showed a lower standard than I have ever seen. One of the best was that of the 16th Lancers, which comprised good players, but had no combination. Colonel Babington played a fine individual game as Back, but it was the old game modelled on Heera Singh, but without his brilliancy. Captain H. Gough however was very good. Being the best G. R. of that day, and a lightweight, he was

so quick on the ball that I have seen very few Forwards able to do any good against him. Mr. J. Wood, of the 18th Hussars, and Captain Kenna, of the 21st Hussars, also came to the front in that year, 1896. By far the best of all the players, however, was Mr. Wilkinson of The Durham Light Infantry. In India I have never met a No. 2 who could be so absolutely depended on, and I look on him as a model whom Forwards would do well to copy. He began by playing No. 1 for his team, and when put back to No. 2, his knowledge of No. 1 play enabled him to change with his First Forward whenever the game made this desirable. Being also a very strong as well as a fine horseman, and always training his own ponies, he made them perfect and could send them along as if he were riding an artistic finish. Although he had not a naturally good eye, from constant practice he could score with certainty, even when driving his pony along. Moreover, he could pick up a ball passed at right angles and make a goal when galloping at it, with a single stroke. No doubt he was much helped by having confidence in his Backs, and so could place himself in position to pick up a ball passed back; but the fact remains that his Backs could always be confident that a good back-hander would change defence into attack, and before the striker could turn, the ball was flying down the ground and the opposite Backs riding their best to try and catch Mr. Wilkinson. It is strange how some men play polo with much

accuracy, but who cannot play any other game of skill. Mr. Wilkinson was no cricketer, nor could he make a break of double figures at billiards. A bad shot, and unable to play racquets or even lawn-tennis, having no eye for it, he was nevertheless the best shot with a polo stick when going at the fastest pace I ever met. He required twice the amount of practice other players put in, but when wound up, he had not his equal as No. 2.

The following year brought out another famous player in Mr. Hardress Lloyd, of the 4th Dragoon Guards. Being a magnificent horseman with a natural eye, he made a very fine Back, and has since shown himself as good in England as in India. In 1903 he was included among the twelve best players at home, a distinction accorded to but two Indian players then in England. Captain Lloyd had a longer reach than any player I know, and even when balls appeared out of his reach, he could return them with a long stroke.

Major R. Hoare, of the 4th Hussars, and Captain Lee, 20th Hussars, were also fine players. The latter promised to become a brilliant Back, but I have not seen him play since 1897, though I have heard he quite fulfilled his promise.

Although few players distinguish themselves as No. 1, there are two, besides Dhokal Singh, who deserve mention. General Pretum Singh of Patiala and Mr. Ashburner of The Durham Light Infantry, were in 1898 the two finest players in this place I ever played against in India. Both were brilliant

horsemen and both were equally good at goal. Opinions differ as to the respective merits of these two players, but if anything Mr. Ashburner was the most dangerous No. 1 of the two. I never saw the famous Heera Singh obliged to play entirely on the defensive until opposed to Ashburner, who was just as good a horseman, and being lighter, could get away quicker. An ordinary Back was helpless against him and being unable to defend the goal, the Half-back was obliged to play Back. Ashburner's method of riding off was irresistible. Remaining about three lengths away from the Back and riding quick ponies he would come in on the curve and the shock of his pony would carry the Back several yards away from the line of the ball.

It is natural that during the South African War first-class polo, which depends so largely on Cavalry Regiments, should have deteriorated. It was revived by the tournament at the Delhi Durbar of 1904, the originators of which deserve the gratitude of all lovers of the game in India. The Ulwar State team, who won this tournament, must have been a good combination, but as I never saw them play, I am unable to compare them with past and present famous teams.

During the past ten years many famous players have made their names on Indian polo grounds, and have added to their reputations both in England and in America. The more I see of these modern polo players the stronger are my doubts as to the unrivalled merits of those in the past. It is difficult to

compare their merits, as the improvement in polo grounds, the height and quality of the ponies, and the difference in the rules alter so much the conditions of play.

Twenty years ago polo was played more universally than at present, but the general standard was not as high. In consequence those who at that time were considered the best players might not be able to compete with success in the present day.

There is very little doubt that playing without offside tends to raise the standard of first-class polo, however much it may spoil station games, and good players become very good being less hampered by the old offside rule. The present rules favour youth and daring, and the steady reliable play so much admired before must now give way to brilliant stick work.

Perhaps it is somewhat due to this fact that players of the past fail in general to compare favourably with players of the present.

At the same time I doubt if there are players now who could surpass the performances of those whom I have mentioned as famous players of the past. In any case let us remember them with kindness as those who have done much for the game we love.

THIRD PART

CHAPTER XXVII

STATION POLO

IN India the arrangements for polo in various stations being in the hands of an Honorary Secretary, it is advisable that all polo players should have a general knowledge of this subject. In some stations there may be a polo club distinct from the gymkhana or sports club. In this case, the polo club is worked much as any other club as regard funds, etc. More often, however, the polo is only a branch of the Station Gymkhana and the funds available depend on the generosity of the Gymkhana Committee. I must admit that most gymkhana clubs are very liberal towards polo, which usually gets a fair proportion of the available funds. The annual allowance is, however, seldom sufficient, and sometimes is not spent in the most profitable way. The chief item of expense is usually water, unless the nature of the soil is such that it is not necessary to water the ground. In a large station where two grounds are maintained, Rs. 4000 per annum is a fair allowance, but I have

known many stations which cannot obtain more than half this sum for polo. If polo is unsatisfactory for want of funds, the remedy lies in the hands of the players themselves. In some cases a change of honorary secretary may be all that is necessary. It does not follow that because a man is a leader of polo he must also be an economical business man, and to get the most value out of the annual allowance requires a considerable knowledge of the subject as well as business-like habits.

If the allowance is inadequate there are two courses open to the polo players. To institute a polo club distinct from the Gymkhana is the most satisfactory way, but this requires at least Rs. 10,000. To make such a club a success financially, the polo club must be a private club, with club pavilion, dressing-rooms, and refreshment-room, in fact similar in every respect to polo clubs in England, but on a smaller scale. As yet the time has not come for this in India, except in some places where the civil element predominates. In garrisons, where the polo players are only temporarily quartered, they can hardly be expected to spend any large sums for the benefit of those who relieve them. The second alternative is to institute a special polo subscription to cover the deficiency of the fund. In Lucknow, six or seven years ago, this Polo Cap used to be called for annually, every player paying Rs. 10 for every pony. Thus a player who kept six polo ponies paid Rs. 60 per annum, and one owning but two ponies paid Rs. 20. Members who played for

less than six months paid Rs. 5 for each pony, and visitors for less than a month were called upon for a small donation in proportion.

In this way, a sum of Rs. 1500 can be raised to supplement the annual allowance, and it is but just that the players who derive most advantage from the polo should bear the heaviest charge.

If players subscribe to polo in addition to the monthly subscription to the Gymkhana Club, it is not unreasonable that they should charge an entrance fee for admission to the enclosure at tournaments, and this constitutes another means of increasing the funds.

If all the polo expenses are paid from the general funds of the gymkhana club, it is natural that every member of the gymkhana should demand as a right to enter the polo pavilion without paying gate-money; but if the polo players pay a subscription to enable tournaments to be held and provide accommodation for on-lookers, gate-money is a fair charge against all but the polo players themselves and competitors. The amount of this charge varies slightly, but I think Rs. 10 for the tournament and Rs. 4 for each day is a reasonable sum. To admit ladies for half this amount is advisable as well as popular. If ladies are charged gate-money, the committee would do well to consider their comfort, and this is much enhanced by laying down some stuff to protect their dresses from the dust on the stands. This bazaar-made stuff is procurable for less than 3 annas a yard and lasts for

many occasions. Another reasonable charge against the polo fund is a dressing-room for players. I am convinced that standing about in wet clothes is a certain way to contract fever in any one liable thereto, and a dressing-room need not cost very much.

The class of polo in a station will much depend on the way games are arranged by the honorary secretary. If games are made up on the ground as players arrive, the polo cannot be anything but bad. In their own interests, players should send in their names stating their requirements as regards matches, fast games, slow games, etc., in sufficient time for the manager to have everything arranged before the hour fixed to begin play. I recommend the manager to keep a book on the ground each day, in which players can enter their names for the following polo day, any alteration or additional name being sent in before noon on the actual day. He can then make up a series of matches, arranging players in such a way as to give every one an opportunity of meeting others of their own class. It is no pleasure for a beginner to find himself in a good game, nor is it fair on good players to spoil their game by the inclusion of those who cannot play good polo. On the other hand, good players are often glad of slow polo in order to bring on young ponies, and are glad to play Back on them in beginners' games. There are, of course, some ambitious beginners who are never content unless they are placed in good games. Such are the greatest

trial to a conscientious manager, and if their social standing is high, it is difficult to relegate them to their proper class.

In some things a manager must be firm. Unpunctuality, either in sending in names for play or in being ready at the appointed hour, must be dealt with in an uncompromising way. If the polo manager gives in about this, his life will be a burden, and good polo will be impossible. If players are not up to time, the only way to retaliate is to put them in the last games the following polo day, or to refuse to include them in good games unless they are prepared to be ready to play at the appointed times.

Whenever a daily paper is published in a station, it saves labour to the manager and the annoyance of waiting about to players, to make up a series of matches the day before, and to publish the names of players and the hours of play in the paper. Members' games, other than the matches published, can then take place between two matches or at any convenient time.

The question of allowing practice on polo grounds on off days is a difficult one and must be decided by local committees. Of course a match ground cannot be maintained in good order unless closed, except for matches, or unless water is laid on. The Calcutta ground, which is perhaps the best in India, gets far more work than any other match ground, and is still maintained in excellent order. This, however, is covered with deep turf,

and having pipe-water laid on, can be well sprinkled in a single morning. Up-country polo grounds will not stand constant practice without deteriorating considerably.

On the other hand, in India where players train their own ponies, some place is required on which to take ponies with stick and ball. Teams working up for a tournament also require to practise together if they expect to win. If there are two grounds, and one can be kept for tournaments, it is advisable to open a strip of the second ground for ponies on off days. Polo grounds receive most work down the 100 yards strip in the centre, and after that on the 50 yards strip nearest to the stand. To open the 50 yards strip furthest from the stand on off days will not cut it up more than the remainder of the ground, and will enable players to get all the practice they want. It is advisable to flag this far quarter off, and if necessary put up a notice-board warning players that only this section is open for practice. To knock about a ball on the ground during play should be prohibited. It may cause accident, but in any case, it is very annoying to the players, however considerate those who practise may be.

Polo managers will find that periodical handicap tournaments will be popular if well arranged. Handicap may be arranged in various ways, but the best polo is shown by the teams being made up by the committee from the names entered, having regard to the places of the players and their relative

merits. Another way is to handicap each player, and allow them to make up their own teams. I have seen a very excellent handicap tournament brought off in this way, but I prefer the handicap to be arranged by the polo committee as already described.

Among the many duties which fall to a polo manager, the organization of polo gymkhanas is not the lightest. Thinking out a programme of events requires some experience, but the most onerous work is to induce players to compete. To advertise the events and to expect entries to come in, is to make certain of failure. To make gymkhanas a success, the events should be tests of skill, horsemanship, and clever ponies, and owners must be personally induced to enter. Once the spirit of competition enters into the players in a station, polo gymkhanas are both amusing to watch and exciting to the competitors. The prizes given at such entertainments are usually so useless that players depart with a firm intention never to enter again. I would suggest that the plated cup, and the bazaar-made cigarette box should give way to such useful articles as suits of English horse clothing, polo whips or Sowter's saddles. No one cares to win a useless article or one that is of no value as a trophy, but stable gear is always welcome, especially if by the best makers.

I must also give a word of advice to players regarding the member who consents to give so much time and trouble to act as honorary secretary for

polo, or polo manager. I have often heard most unfair complaints made against him, and have seen him treated in a way a paid official would not tolerate. If the polo manager fails in that capacity, and remember it is no easy place to fill, a hint from the committee is sufficient for him to resign it ; but when a man is doing his best for the benefit of station polo, he has every right to expect the support of all the players. When a polo manager is found to provide good polo, to maintain the grounds in order and the funds in credit, he must be recognized as an exceptional man, and the members cannot do too much to lighten his labours if they would protect their own interests.



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CHAPTER XXVIII

POLO GROUNDS

THE maintenance of polo grounds in good order is an art requiring not only a good general knowledge of practical grass farming, but experience to estimate the value of the soil, the amount of play expected, and the water available. In addition to this, the cost of preparing grounds, sowing and manuring them, should be subjects well established in every polo club, and recorded in the club books for reference by future polo managers. To give in detail the cost of a certain polo ground in India would not help much, for whereas a ground at Meerut or Lucknow costs Rs. 2000 per annum, that in Bombay or Mhow does not require Rs. 500. I will therefore confine my remarks to the best and most scientific way of making grounds, preserving them, and when necessary renewing them.

To make a new polo ground two things must be considered, the cost of levelling and the cost of preparing the soil. To estimate the cost of levelling a specialist is required, but as in every station an officer of the Royal Engineers, or a District Engineer of the Public Works Department can be

found, such an estimate can be obtained without difficulty. There are certain points, however, which require consideration. If grounds are required in the rainy season, as at Poona and in all hill stations, a slight slope is an advantage, as the rain runs off and the ground dries quickly. The fall should be to one side of the ground and not towards a goal. Moreover, the fall should not be more than 4 feet in the 200 yards. If greater than this, the wash will remove the soil and form channels which cannot be permanently filled up. If the ground is level, from July to September polo is impossible, as the rain will sink in and make it too soft. Polo grounds in the plains, being required from October to the following June, cannot be too level as the water during the rains is wanted to sink in. If banked up all round and made into a temporary lake during the monsoon, they will be the better during the polo season. It is during a heavy shower of rain that the level of a polo ground can be tested. If water lies in any spot, it is evident that a depression requires filling up, and if any part lies above the flood high and dry, this requires cutting off.

A polo ground requires 10 yards at each end and 5 yards at the sides clear of obstacles ; for if more is enclosed an accident may occur when ponies are racing for the ball. It is better, therefore, to have the ground a few yards short of the maximum limits than to have a dangerous obstacle close to the boundary lines.

Having levelled the area, the four corners should

be staked out, as well as the centre of each goal. This work must be done most carefully with proper instruments and chain measure. If the goals are not in their exact places or the angles inaccurate, they are liable to remain so for many years, or until some scientific polo manager has the energy to check the measurements. An error in this makes it unfair to visitors when competing against the home team. This is one reason that a team playing on its own ground is considered two goals better than on a strange one. Of course players and ponies get to know where the goals are without actually looking up, which is an enormous advantage ; but if the goals are not in their exact spot the visiting team is at a still greater disadvantage.

There are many ways of preparing the soil for a polo ground. Much, of course, depends on the nature of the soil, for if black cotton soil, as it is at Mhow, little preparation is necessary. Red soil like at Poona is the most difficult of all, but if treated in a similar way to the white loam of the plains, I think grass would grow there equally well. As the majority of polo grounds are composed of hard white soil, I propose to give in detail the best way of preparing this for polo grounds. The method is what is generally known as trenching. Deep trenches are cut about 2 feet deep and 2 feet wide. These are filled with good manure and covered with the soil excavated from the next trench cut parallel to the first, and so on all down the ground. This system is an exact copy of deep

ploughing, but in order to supply the grass with nourishment for seven years, more manure is used. The best time to carry out this preparation is before the first fall of the rains. The ground will then sink during the first rains and can be levelled and sown a month later. There are three ways of obtaining a good surface of grass, viz., by seed, spreading over chopped up grass and covering it with good soil, and by the process called dibbling. Of these I prefer the second method, though dibbling is perhaps better for small patches. It takes much longer and is consequently more expensive.

Sowing dhoob grass chopped up is practically the same as planting cuttings. The grass having been collected by cheeling or digging up, it is chopped up into sections about one and a half inches long, and sown over the ground, so close together that a two-inch square cannot be seen uncovered by grass. It is then sprinkled with water and covered with rich soil, about half manure and half alluvial soil brought from the bed of a river, or else black soil if available. A little river sand mixed with this is an advantage. The soil is spread on the chopped grass to a depth from half to one inch, and must be sprinkled with water the following day. If this process is carried on during the rains, labour is saved in carrying water, but if the rain is very heavy all this soil may be washed away, especially if the ground is on a slope. In ten days the grass begins to sprout, and a few days later it can be seen at a glance if any portion of the grass has failed to strike.

The mistake should be rectified at once, the ground being sown again without delay. As soon as the grass shoots up uniformly, the question of good turf depends on water, clipping, and rolling. A ground so prepared in July or August during the second fall of the rains, will be fit for play in December or January, and though it will cut up during the first season more than an old ground, it will be perfect from a polo point of view. There is a danger during the first fall of the rains from white ants. At this time ants get their wings, and the females leave the ground and search for a place to lay their eggs and found a family of which they hope to be queen. Any manure is looked upon as a good spot for this, and if spread over a polo ground at this time the white ant will certainly make its nest in it, with the result that the ground will show traces of this pest in the cold weather. White ants in a ground is ruin to the grass, and the cavities they make will eventually become small craters which fall in during a game, constituting a danger to riders as well as ponies.

I must now consider the cost of trenching and sowing. It depends much on how the labour is provided and the cost of labour in the station in question, but the total cost of making a first-class ground to last seven years or more may be taken at Rs. 3000 after the preliminary levelling has taken place.

The excellent polo ground at Delhi at the time of the Durbar was made in this way by contract,

but under the supervision of one of the most experienced of Government Garden Superintendents. The contract price, including trenching, manure and grass, was Rs. 250 an acre, and as a full-sized ground is twelve and a half acres, the cost came to Rs. 3125. This is a fair guide to making new grounds, but a polo manager, when making a contract, will do well to employ an overseer to ensure the trenches are deep cut, close together, and well filled with manure. If manure is provided by the polo club, it is well to know that 1500 to 2000 loads will be required, of which 500 loads will be wanted for top dressing the ground after the chopped grass has been sown.

If a polo ground is required in a station and so large a sum is not available, the same temporary result can be obtained for far less, but a ground of this sort will not last a quarter the time, as the roots of the grass do not grow down as in a trenched ground. In this case, the ground should be ploughed up either with a country spiked plough, or, better still, with a small English plough about 8 inches deep. Before using the English plough, the manure is spread over the surface and ploughed in, just as may be seen on any farm at home. With the country plough this is not possible, and the only manure put in is a top dressing when sowing the grass. Though I recommend that trenching be done by contract, it is better to make a temporary ground by employing labour. The cost will not exceed Rs. 1500, and if manure is cheap and grass

obtainable off another ground, Rs. 1000 should cover everything.

In some stations, no attempt is made to grow grass and more attention is given to filling up depressions and adding water. Nor am I prepared to say that grass is essential. The best ground I ever played on was at Jodhpore, which is made of red sand-stone, rammed lightly when wet. The ground cuts up after an afternoon's play, but after watering and rolling, is again perfect the following day. Moreover the spring of this ground is splendid, and ponies playing every day do not show any signs of concussion. Again, at Mhow there used to be only one ground, and the amount of play it received made any attempt at grass a certainty of failure. Being all alluvial soil, it only required the constant addition of clay to bind it; and the surface was always good, though it cut up a great deal. Nevertheless, I think a grass ground the most durable, and though it will cut up and become dusty, if well watered, the grass can be preserved, and the charm of playing on turf as we see it at Quetta and Calcutta cannot be equalled by anything else, however effective it may be.

We now come to the question of water, and water depends on funds. If funds are available for piping and the cost of pipe water, of course water should be laid on. I cannot give the cost of this even roughly, but any engineer could supply the figures. The chief expense is not so much for the initial cost as for the water used. In 1897

pipes were laid on to the Poona ground, and by this means the ground can be prepared for tournaments in spite of the absence of grass. In Calcutta the ground is perfect, and the grass is kept in excellent condition by the daily use of pipe water. Polo managers could obtain information regarding the cost of water from either of these clubs if required. By far the most common means of obtaining water is from wells sunk in the vicinity of the ground. This way is both costly and laborious and the results are not good. With two wells, it takes three weeks to flood a ground properly, and in dry weather this is not enough to keep down the dust, much less to make the grass grow. At the same time, when well water is the only way at our disposal, we must make the best of it. At the present time, an experiment is being tried at Lucknow, where a Persian wheel is being put up to take the place of the rope and hide bucket. If successful, it will no doubt be tried elsewhere, for few stations have more difficulty over water, which is 55 feet below the surface there.

Before a ground is flooded, the surface should be prepared. It is useless to water an uneven surface, and rolling a hard ground is no good. When much cut up, the best way to prepare the surface is to use a light spiked harrow, followed by a brush harrow formed of branches of willow or other suitable brushwood. After the water has sunk in, and the surface is dry, a very light roller will be all that is wanted to make the surface even. A

heavy roller makes the ground too hard, and as it cracks the surface, it also makes it dusty.

A grass ground is well shown up by cheeling all the grass outside for two or three yards. This also assists players to see when the ball goes out.

The grass on a polo ground should bring in an annual income. If sold to a contractor the best value can be obtained by charging a fixed sum for every maund cut, but insisting on the ground being cheeled uniformly and within a certain time. If preferred, grass can be cut and stacked by employed labour, but unless well supervised, this method is not so lucrative as the former. After September 1st no grass should be cut, except with the mowing machine, which cannot be used too often. The shorter grass is kept, the more it will spread along the ground, and these shoots sending down roots bind the soil and prevent it rising as dust. The maintenance of a grass ground requires much care as well as experience, and a polo manager, unless thoroughly acquainted with this subject, would do well to consult a Superintendent of Government Gardens, all of whom are experts. The method adopted by them is to cheel all grass in May or June, prior to the first rains. In July or August, a crop of grass is again removed and sold. The ground is then well covered with old manure, well sifted and broken up. Six hundred loads will be required on a polo ground every year to keep it perfect. As soon as the grass grows up through the manure, it can be cut with

the mowing machine, and if the top dressing is laid down about the middle of August, and the grass cut at the end of September, the ground should be perfect at the end of the first week in October. Of course every soil will require some variation in the treatment, and for this reason the advice of a grass expert is most valuable.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE RULES OF POLO

BEFORE competing in any competition, it is very necessary that all competitors should be well acquainted with the conditions. In spite of this well-established maxim, it is no unusual thing to find players in a polo tournament, and even umpires, almost ignorant of the Rules of Polo. It is true that in India the rules are continually being changed, and a proportion of polo players in India are unwilling to accept the Rules of Polo established in England, holding that India being the birthplace of modern polo, new rules should emanate in India.

In recent years more Indian players have played regularly in England, and in consequence the Hurlingham Rules are more generally adopted. This is an advantage in every way, and the general tendency should be towards accepting the Hurlingham Rules entirely with a few local bye-laws.

Before competing in a tournament the players of a team should meet and discuss the rules and local conditions. Half an hour spent on this is well spent, and may often make the difference between winning and losing a match. It is no

unusual thing to see important matches lost owing to a player being ignorant of a well-known rule, such as continuing the play at the end of a match when the scores are equal.

As regards umpires, I recommend that these should always be provided with a stiff card on which fouls and their penalties are printed. This is the custom in England, and in India, with the constant changes in rules, it is even more necessary.

Copies of the rules of the Indian Polo Association are published annually in India, so it is unnecessary to give them here, but I give the Hurlingham Rules in detail, as I know from experience how often players wish to refer to them, and how difficult they are to procure in India.

HURLINGHAM RULES, 1912.

HEIGHT.

*1.—The height of ponies shall not exceed 14 hands 2 inches, and no pony shall be played either in practice games or matches, unless it has been registered in accordance with the Rules of Measurement. (*See Penalty 9.*)

UNSAFE PONY.

2.—No pony showing vice or not under proper control shall be allowed in the game. (*See Penalty 10.*)

GROUND.

3.—The goals to be not less than 250 yards apart, and each goal to be 8 yards wide.

* Subject to local alterations, except in the United Kingdom.

A full-sized ground should not exceed 300 yards in length by 200 yards in width, if unboarded ; and 300 yards in length and 160 yards in width if boarded.

SIZE AND WEIGHT OF BALLS.

4.—The size of the balls shall not exceed $3\frac{1}{4}$ in. in diameter, and the weight of the ball shall not exceed $5\frac{1}{2}$ oz.

UMPIRE.

5.—Each side shall nominate an Umpire, unless it be mutually agreed to play with one instead of two : and his or their decisions shall be final.

REFEREE.

In important matches, in addition to the Umpires a Referee may be appointed, whose decision in the event of the Umpires disagreeing shall be final.

WHISTLE.

6.—The Umpire shall carry a whistle, which he shall use as required. If the Umpire blow his whistle the ball is dead, but if the other Umpire disagrees, a Referee shall be called in, who, after consulting both Umpires and taking any necessary evidence, shall decide on the course to be pursued.

Any infringement of the Rules constitutes a foul. In case of an infringement of Rules 21, 23, 24, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, and 31, the Umpire shall stop the game.

TIMEKEEPER AND SCORER.

7.—An official Timekeeper and Scorer shall be employed in all games and matches.

NUMBER OF PLAYERS.

8.—The number of players contending is limited to four a side in all games and matches.

HOW GAME COMMENCES.

9.—The game commences by both sides taking up their position in the middle of the ground, and the Umpire throwing the ball into the centre of the ground between the opposing ranks of players.

DURATION OF PLAY.

*10.—The duration of play in a match shall be 7 periods of eight minutes, with intervals of three minutes after each period, no deduction being made for overtime.

The first 6 periods of play shall terminate as soon as the ball goes out of play after the expiration of the prescribed time, or, on boarded grounds, when the ball strikes the boards.

On play being resumed, the ball shall be thrown in as laid down in Rule 16.

LAST PERIOD.

The last period shall terminate, although the ball is still in play, at the first stroke of the final bell, wherever the ball may be.

EXCEPTION IN CASE OF TIE.

In case of a tie the last period shall be prolonged till the ball goes out of play, or strikes the boards, and if still a tie, after an interval of five minutes, the ball shall be started from where it went out of play and the game continued in periods of eight minutes, with the usual intervals, until one side obtain a goal, which shall determine the match.

11.—The bell shall be rung to signify to the players that the eight minutes has expired, and it shall be rung again when the ball next goes out of play, to indicate the time for changing ponies.

* Subject to local alterations, except in the United Kingdom.

CHANGING PONIES.

12.—(a) With the exception of the intervals allowed in Rule 10, play shall be continuous ; any change of ponies, except according to the above provision, shall be at the risk of the player.

DEDUCTION OF TIME IN CASE OF A FOUL.

(b) When a foul is allowed by the Umpire, the time shall be deducted from the period till the game starts again. The ball is dead till the Umpire says " Play."

FOUL AT END OF MATCH.

13.—In the case of a penalty being incurred towards the end of a match, and there not being time to exact the penalty before the final bell rings, " one minute extra shall be allowed " from the time the ball is hit or hit at in carrying out the penalty.

BALL HIT BEHIND BY ATTACKING SIDE.

14.—If the ball be hit behind the back line by one of the opposite side, it shall be hit off without delay from where it crossed the line, but at least twelve feet from the goal post, after giving the opposing side reasonable time to get to the 30 yards line. None of the attacking side shall be within 30 yards of the back line when the ball is hit off. (*See Penalty 5.*)

UNNECESSARY DELAY.

N.B.—There must be no unnecessary delay. (*See Penalty 6.*)

BALL HIT BEHIND BY DEFENDING SIDE.

15.—If the ball be hit behind the back line by one of the defending side, penalty 4 shall be exacted, provided the ball does not glance off another player or another pony. (*See Penalty 4.*)

BALL THROWN IN BY UMPIRE.

16.—When the ball is hit out, it must be thrown into the ground by the Umpire from the exact spot where it went out, in a direction parallel to the two goal lines, and between the opposing ranks of players, no player to stand within 5 yards of the side line.

NO DELAY ALLOWED.

There must be no delay whatsoever on any consideration for absent players.

BALL OUT.

17.—The ball must go over and clear of the boundary line to be out.

GOALS.

18.—A goal is gained when a ball passes between the goal posts and over the goal line.

OVER TOP OF GOAL POSTS.

If a ball is hit above the top of the goal posts, but in the opinion of the Umpire, between those posts produced, it shall be deemed a goal.

TO WIN GAME.

19.—The side that makes most goals wins the game.

ENDS CHANGED.

20.—Ends shall be changed after every goal, or, if no goal have been obtained, after the 3rd period. After a goal has been scored the game shall be restarted from the centre of the ground as described in Rule 9.

RIDING OUT AN ANTAGONIST AND CROSSING.

21.—A player may ride out an antagonist, or interpose his pony before his antagonist, so as to prevent the latter reaching the ball, but he may not cross another player in

possession of the ball, except at such a distance that the said player shall not be compelled to check his pony to avoid a collision. (*See Penalty 1.*)

DEFINITION OF CROSSING.

If two players are riding from different directions to hit the ball, and a collision appears probable, then the player in possession of the ball (that is, who last hit the ball, or if neither have hit the ball, the player who is coming from the direction from which the ball was last hit) must be given way to. (*See Penalty 1.*)

EXACT LINE OF THE BALL.

(i.) Any player who follows the exact line of the ball from the direction from which it has been last hit, is in possession of the ball rather than any player coming from any other direction.

LAST STRIKER.

The last striker is in possession provided that no other player can, without causing the striker to check his pony to avoid a collision, get on the line of the ball in front of him. Under these circumstances the last striker may not ride into the adversary from behind, but must if necessary take the ball on the near side of his own pony.

No player shall be deemed to be in possession of the ball by reason of his being the last striker if he shall have deviated from pursuing the exact course of the ball.

RIDING TO MEET THE BALL.

(ii.) Any player who rides to meet the ball on the exact line of its course is in possession rather than any other player riding at an angle from any direction.

RIDING AT AN ANGLE.

(iii.) Any player riding from the direction from which the ball has last been hit, at an angle to its course, has possession rather than any player riding at an angle in the opposite direction.

RIDING IN SAME DIRECTION.

(iv.) If two players are riding from the same direction, that player is in possession whose course is at the smallest angle to the line of the ball.

LEFT-HANDED PLAYERS.

(v.) If two players are riding from opposite directions to hit the ball, one of these being a left-handed player, the latter must give way.

THE LINE OF THE BALL.

N.B.—The line of the ball is the line of its course, or that line produced at the moment any question arises.

22.—No player shall play with his left hand, except left-handed players registered at Hurlingham during 1907.

DANGEROUS RIDING.

23.—No player shall ride dangerously.

As for example—

(a) Bumping at an angle dangerous to a player or his pony.

(b) Zigzagging in front of another player riding at a gallop.

(c) Pulling across or over a pony's forelegs in such manner as to risk tripping the pony, etc., etc. (*See Penalty 1.*)

DANGEROUS USE OF STICK.

24.—No player shall use his stick dangerously. (*See Penalty 1.*)

25.—In the case of a player being disabled by a foul, penalty 8 may be exacted by the side that has been fouled, and penalty 1 shall be exacted in any case. (*See Penalties 1 and 8.*)

•

ROUGH PLAY.

26.—No player shall seize with the hand, strike, or push with the head, hand, arm, or elbow, but a player may push with his arm, above the elbow, provided the elbow be kept close to his side. (*See Penalty 1 or 2 or 3.*)

DANGEROUS ROUGH PLAY.

N.B.—Penalty 1 shall only be exacted if the Umpire considers the play dangerous.

CROOKING STICKS.

27.—(a) No player shall crook an adversary's stick, unless he is on the same side of an adversary's pony as the ball, or in a direct line behind, and his stick is neither over nor under the body or across the legs of an adversary's pony. The stick may not be crooked unless an adversary is in the act of striking at the ball.

(b) If a player in attempting to strike the ball across the forelegs of an adversary's pony crooks the latter's stick, this constitutes a foul unless he succeeds in striking the ball. (*See Penalty 2 or 3.*)

CARRYING BALL.

28.—A player may not carry the ball. In the event of the ball lodging upon or against a player or pony, it must be immediately dropped on the ground. (*See Penalty 2 or 3.*)

STRIKING PONY WITH HEAD OF POLO STICK.

29.—No player shall intentionally strike his pony with the head of his polo stick. (*See Penalty 2 or 3.*)

BROKEN STICKS.

30.—Should a player's stick be broken, he must borrow one from one of his own side, or ride to the place where sticks are kept and take one. (*See Penalty 2 or 3.*)

DROPPED STICK.

In the event of a stick being dropped he must either pick it up himself, borrow one from one of his own side, or ride to the place where sticks are kept and take one. On no account may a stick be brought on to the ground. (*See Penalty 2 or 3.*)

DISMOUNTED PLAYER.

31.—No dismounted player is allowed to hit the ball or interfere in the game. (*See Penalty 2 or 3.*)

THROWING IN BALL.

32.—If the ball be damaged, the Umpire shall, at his discretion, stop the game, and throw in a new ball as near as possible to where the ball is when the whistle sounds, towards the nearest side of the ground, in a direction parallel to the two goal lines and between the opposing ranks of players.

N.B.—It is desirable that the game shall be stopped and the ball changed when the damaged ball is in such a position that neither side is favoured thereby.

GROUND KEPT CLEAR.

33.—No person allowed within the arena—Players, Umpires, Referee, and Manager excepted.

ACCIDENTS.

34.—If a pony falls, or if a player or a pony be injured, the Umpires shall stop the game.

If a player falls off his pony, the Umpire shall not stop the game unless he is of opinion that the player is injured.

What constitutes a fall shall be left to the decision of the Umpire.

WHERE BALL THROWN IN.

N.B.—On play being resumed, the ball shall be thrown in, where it was when the game was stopped, and in the manner provided for in Rule 32.

• SPURS AND BLINKERS.

35.—No blinkers or spurs with rowels are allowed ; no pony blind of an eye is allowed to play.

SUBSTITUTES IN TOURNAMENTS.

36.—In Tournaments if a player having taken part in the Tournament for any reason be unable to play, he may, with the consent of the Committee of the Club where the Tournament is held, be replaced by any player who by the Rules of the Tournament is qualified, provided the said player has not already competed in another team.

DISREGARD OF UMPIRE.

37.—The decision and injunctions of the Umpire must not be disregarded or questioned. (*See Penalty 7.*)

UNFINISHED MATCHES.

38.—In the event of a game being stopped by darkness, weather, or for any cause which prevents a finish the same day, it shall be resumed on the first convenient and agreed opportunity in the usual manner.

39.—Frost Nails and Screws are not allowed.

INCIDENTS NOT PROVIDED FOR.

40.—Should any incident or question not provided for in these Rules arise, such incident or question shall be decided by the Umpire or Umpires. If the Umpires disagree, a Referee shall be called in whose decision shall be final.

PENALTIES.

Penalty 1.

A free " hit at " the ball from a spot 50 yards from the goal line of the side fouling, opposite the centre of goal, or if preferred from where the foul occurred ; all the side fouling to be behind their back line until the ball is hit or hit at, but not between the goal posts, nor when the ball is brought into play may any of the side ride out from between the goal posts. None of the side fouled to be nearer the goal line produced than the ball is, at the moment it is hit or hit at.

Penalty 2.

A free "hit at" the ball from where it was when the foul took place, none of the side fouling to be within 20 yards of the ball. The side fouled being free to place themselves where they choose.

Penalty 3.

The side fouling take the ball back and hit it off from behind their own goal-line, from the centre of goal, none of the side fouled to be within 30 yards of the goal line produced, the side fouling being free to place themselves where they choose.

Penalty 4.

A free "hit at" the ball from a spot opposite where the ball was hit behind and 60 yards distant from the "goal line produced," none of the side fouling to be within 20 yards of the ball. The side fouled being free to place themselves where they choose.

Penalty 5.

In the case of failure to correctly carry out—

- (a) Penalties 1, 2 and 4, *by the side fouling*—a second free hit at the ball if a goal has not been scored.
- (b) Penalty 1, *by the side fouled*—a hit out from behind by the other side from the centre of goal, the defending side being free to place themselves where they choose.
- (c) Penalty 3, *by the side fouled*—a second hit out from behind.
- (d) Rule 14 *by the attacking side*—a second hit out from behind.
- (e) When Penalties 1, 2, 3 and 4 are not properly carried out, or Rule 14 is infringed by both sides simultaneously, the ball shall be hit or hit at, as the case may be, from the same spot as before.

Penalty 6.

In the event of unnecessary delay in hitting out the ball, the Umpire shall call on the offending side to hit out at

once ; if the Umpire's request is not complied with he shall bowl in the ball underhand, at the spot where the ball crossed the back line at right angles to the goal line or "goal line produced" as hard as possible. In this case the penalty for an off-side shall not be claimed against the attacking side should no one of the defending side be between them and the goal line produced, or behind that line.

Penalty 7.

The offender warned off the ground for remainder of Match, no substitute allowed to take his place.

Penalty 8.

Designation of any of the players on the side fouling, who shall retire from the game. The game shall be continued with three players aside, and if the side fouling refuse to continue the game, it shall thereby lose the match.

Penalty 9.

Disqualification of team offending.

Penalty 10.

The pony ordered off the ground.

RULES OF MEASUREMENT.

(As adopted by the Hurlingham Club.)

OFFICIAL MEASURER.

1.—The measurement shall be made by an Official Measurer under the supervision of the Polo Committee. Such Official Measurer shall be appointed by the Committee and shall be a duly qualified Veterinary Surgeon.

TIME OF MEASUREMENT.

2.—The Official Measurer shall attend at Hurlingham for the purpose of measuring ponies on certain days which shall be advertised on the front page of the *Morning Post*.

DESCRIPTION OF PONY AND FEE PAID.

3.—The person presenting a pony for measurement at Hurlingham must give it a name, and pay to the Manager a fee of 10s. before the pony can be measured. (Particulars as to the measurements and fees at other places may be obtained from the Manager.)

AGE OF PONY. LIFE CERTIFICATE.

4.—Ponies may be measured and registered *for Life*, provided they are four years old "off," on and after the 1st of August. Younger ponies can be registered for the current season only. The Official Measurer shall determine the age of the pony.

CONDITION OF PONY.

5.—A pony shall not be measured if he appears to have been subjected to any improper treatment with a view to reduce his height, or if he is in an unfit state to be measured. If a pony is rejected under this Rule, he shall not be presented again for measurement until the following season, and the name of the owner of such pony shall be reported by the Official Measurer to the Hurlingham Polo Committee.

STANDARD AND PLACE OF MEASUREMENT.

6.—The measurement shall be made with a standard approved by the Club, and in a box with a level floor specially erected for the purpose.

ACCESS TO MEASURING.

7.—Neither the owner of the pony nor his servant shall on any account enter the box during the measurement, nor shall any other person be admitted unless specially authorized by the Official Measurer, but members of the Polo Committee shall have a right to attend the measurement when their own ponies are not being measured.

POSITION OF PONY AND STANDARD.

8.—The pony shall stand stripped on the level floor, and the measurement shall be made at the highest point of the withers.

•
HOLDING PONY.

9.—The pony shall be held by a person deputed by the Official Measurer.

POSITION OF HEAD.

10.—The head shall be held in a natural position.

LEGS.

11.—The forelegs from the point of the shoulder, and the hind legs from the back downwards, shall be as perpendicular to the floor and as parallel to each other as the conformation of the pony allows.

HAIR AND SKIN.

12.—The wither may be shaved, but the mane must not be pulled down, nor the skin of the neck or wither in any way interfered with.

SHOES.

13.—Ponies may be measured with or without shoes, but no allowance shall be made if the shoes be retained.

I.P.A. AND S.A.P.A. CERTIFICATES.

14.—Certificates of height issued by the Indian Polo Association and South African Polo Association will be accepted at Hurlingham provided the standard height in those countries does not exceed 14 hands 2 inches.

CERTIFICATES FOR INDIA.

15.—The Official Measurer is authorized to give 14.1 certificates for India.

APPEAL.

16.—Any person who is dissatisfied with the determination arrived at may by a written application, presented to the Manager within seven days from the time of measurement, apply for a re-measurement. Such re-measurement

shall take place in the presence of one member of the Polo Committee, and on the first convenient day which may be appointed, and his decision shall be final. The charge for measurement on appeal shall be according to the usual scale.

RE-NAMING OR RE-REGISTERING.

17.—No pony shall be re-named nor re-registered at Hurlingham, without a declaration of the previous owner's name, and the pony's previously registered name. Failure to comply with this Rule shall be reported to the Hurlingham Club Polo Committee, and may render the person responsible for such re-naming or re-registration liable for disqualification from playing at Hurlingham, and shall render the pony liable to permanent exclusion from the "List of Polo Ponies registered at Hurlingham."

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